WHEN THE WILD CRABAPPLE PUTS FORTH BLOSSOMS

CHARLES KNAPP CARPENTER

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A REVELATION OF THE LOVE OF GOD

When the Wild Crab-Apple Puts Forth Blossoms

Nature Sermons Preached in the
First Methodist Episcopal
Church, Aurora, Ill.

By

The Reverend
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Cincinnati:
JENNINGS AND GRAHAM

New York:
EATON AND MAINS

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Dedication

This Book is Dedicated to Lovers of
God Who are Seeking Closer
Acquaintance with Him
as They Go About in
His Beautiful
World.

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GOD TEACHES THE PARENT BIRD TO CARE FOR ITS YOUNG

FOREWORD

THESE sermons have been preached at varying intervals of several months. They have come from the heart of one who has intensely loved nature from a boy, who believes and has always believed that this is God's world, that He thinks enough of it to make it His winter-residence and summer-residence alike, that He is always at home, and can be found in it by one who seeks to know Him; and that as God teaches the parent bird to care for its young, to protect them and feed them, so will He teach and guide and protect His children.

These sermons are sent out with the hope that they may arouse pleasant memories in the minds of lovers of God's world, that they may stimulate a greater love for God and His world, and that they may help some to find Him who somehow may have come mistakenly to believe

that the God of the Bible, the Christian's God, and the God of the Universe are different Beings. There is but ONE GOD, whether we worship Him in church or in field, while listening to singing choir or singing brook, to the voice of the prophet or the voice of the stars.

"GOOD MORNING"

Chickadee at Home

INTRODUCTION

HUGH MACMILLAN has shown the depth and beauty there are in nature-interpretations of the Holy Scriptures. The God who made all things which bear the stamp GOOD, "and God saw that it was good," —that God will have pleasure in having His Scriptures interpreted in terms of the wood and the wild and the field.

Besides, this is no longer an inference since the Christ preached in our town; for His method was so flushed with the dawn and restful with the dusk and did so distil the meanings of the growing things and the foxes and the birds and the smell of the new-plowed fields, He made a picture-book in words of such things as call the open sky their house.

My friend Carpenter, who knows so much about God's wild beasties and who knows the Christ to love Him, has done well to speak with

picture and with word on the parables of God which are forever present in the Scriptures of Written Truth and in the scriptures of Nature. I have been afield with him and have been at prayer with him, and know he cares for the whole of the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father.

Therefore, welcome this volume. May it bring forth fruit both by winter and by summer, being one of God's perennials which shall wear blossoms and ripened fruit together all the year.

WILLIAM A. QUAYLE.

I

THE COMING OF SPRING

THE COMING OF SPRING

"My beloved spake and said unto Me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. . . . Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. . . . The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old."—Song of Solomon.

"And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."—Genesis 8:21, 22.

"And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."—Genesis 9:16.

I

"When the fig-tree puts forth leaves."—Matthew 24:32. Or, "When the wild crab-apple puts forth blossoms."—Author's Revised Version.

IF we were dwellers in Palestine we would stand where Jesus stood and watch the unfolding of the draperies of the fig tree. Being dwellers elsewhere, but with the same spirit, we stand entranced by the beauties of this land, and in the presence of the spirit of the springtime our hearts are filled with praise to God. There is an epidemic abroad in our land; I know not how many victims, but they are legion; and if our prayers are offered for the ceasing of the epidemic of foul disease which ravages and kills, I pray for the spread of this epidemic until every one has become its victim; and as a result of this fever there is prayer and worship and praise to God, the Builder of the world.

It is an epidemic of spring-fever, and a thoroughly inoculated victim stands before you.

Perhaps some of you will think you hear the ravings of a disordered brain. My thought, expressed with all gentleness, is that the ailment, the disorder, is in the brain of the man who can walk abroad at this season of the year and not be bewitched by the ravishing enticements of Nature.

There is no calendar able to tell when spring will come any more than it can tell when the measles will come. In both cases the fevers are catching and are known by their fruits. A man who is interested enough to know one season from another, and to whom it makes any difference when spring does come, will have no difficulty in telling. The evidences are within him.

Spring-fever is as definite a disease as measles and much more pleasant. I have had both, and speak from experience. As with bodily ills, this fever may not manifest itself at the same time to all its victims. Some catch it rather late in the season; but if so, they miss some of the delightful preliminary stages. It is of these early symptoms that I speak first.

As a boy, when the fever came on, I made

whistles from slender willows, vented my spirits by blasts long and loud that would send the blue jays scurrying from the crab-apple thicket with wild cries of alarm, and I cunningly noted

WILD CRAB-APPLE BLOSSOMS

the tallest of the willow-shoots and carefully spared it for another day. But already in imagination, I saw it bending from the frantic endeavors of a minnow—or "shiner," in boy language—to run away with my bobber. If I were a woman it would manifest itself in numberless

plans for assaults upon the dust that had accumulated during the winter months. Being a man, and therefore not compelled to "ask ma whether I can go a-fishin'," or to ask my husband whether I may clean house, with his assistance on the carpets, with light heart and impatient mood I wait for the first robin, then blithely snatch my cap and start for—Oh! anywhere, away from houses and folks.

The robin is the harbinger of spring and the forerunner of spring-fever, and therefore I seek first for him. The robin is a gallant gentleman (indeed, most birds are) and does not ask the lady to come north until he has explored the land. I admire the robin's manner. He has a jaunty way which leads us to believe that he knows spring is on the way. And he is so pert when he drops down upon the elm branch and carelessly sings, "Wake up; wake up! Spring is coming, coming, coming," we can scarcely believe that he has made a long journey to bring us this glad news. He knows from experience that there will be blustery days and ice and snow; but he refuses to be dismayed or frightened, and sings his roundelay so merrily,

"Cheer up; cheer up! Spring is coming, coming, coming," that he makes the words bubble to my lips, "Cheer up; cheer up! What does blustery weather amount to, anyhow?"

I thank God for the robin in the early spring; and driven by the spring-fever, I go abroad to look for the bluebird. It has been banished from our yards and bird-boxes by the ill-mannered English sparrow, but it has a cheerful way of doing the best it can under the circumstances. Not being wanted about our homes, it has taken to the fields and fence-posts. Out in the country I find it. This wingéd comrade of mine carries the blue of the sky upon its back; tinted, we may easily imagine as it has made its way through the blue sky from the distant South; and it has painted its breast from the same terra-cotta jar the robin used. And there are the meadow-larks, bearing the yellow of the dandelions upon their throats, and the wild ducks circling about the ponds, and the song sparrow announcing its arrival from the topmost twig of the pussy willow.

On a southern slope I bask in the sun and watch the mud turtles crawling out of the cold

waters onto an old log, that they too may bask in the sun. They remind me of the village street-corner where men are basking on dry-goods boxes or lazily leaning against the warm side of buildings. Work does not suffer at their hands, either men or turtles; but probably nothing else will. I pick up a turtle as it is crawling to another pond, and note the picture on the under shell, and the brilliant lines of red and yellow, and marvel at the generosity of God in dealing out the beautiful colors to the humblest creatures. How is the turtle able to find its way from pond to pond without compass and without getting lost? It may satisfy some to say that God created the creature that way, which is true; but others will ask how it has been done, and in what way do these powers manifest themselves; and they add to the world's store of knowledge through this spirit of investigation.

Driven by the frenzy of this early spring-fever, I am searching for the first flowers: in the marshy land the brown pod of the skunk cabbage, encasing a thick head bearing numerous tiny blossoms, crowds through the earth,

preceding the huge heart-shaped leaves; and the marsh marigold with its cluster of kidney-shaped leaves and loved by country folk for "greens," opens many tufts of golden flowers. On the rocky bluffs are the hepaticas, delicate blossoms of varying tints of white and pink and purple; in the thicket along the old rail-fence, the bloodroot, as delicate as an invalid maid; in the woods, the anemones and spring beauty; on the gravel-bank, the windflower, anemone too, but wearing its name gracefully as it sways in the breeze. And while the search continues, new ones are coming on: buttercups and violets and trilliums and adder's tongues; and the procession seems endless and is endless. As we watch them pass we give our word of praise to the early blossoms that have pushed their way through the cold ground and dead leaves, and have defied the chilling winds and flurries of snow. And we give a word of praise to God, who has made the blossoms and who has sent us abroad this day.

Spring is coming, always coming. The spirit of adventure is in the air; and as one gets in touch with the great world about him, the spirit

of adventure—to dare and to do—takes possession of a man, and he is more of a man than when he grabbed his hat and started afield at the call of the robin and the spring-fever. The fever ebbs and flows, but is so pronounced this May day that we must go abroad again, forgetting, if we can, these pews and walls and vaulted arches, and seeing rather the aisles and arches of the leafy temples of the forest.

When the wild crab-apple puts forth blossoms the trees are in various stages of robing themselves for the summer's journey. Some seem to have forgotten the call of May, the branches are so bare and ungainly. Others have lately aroused, and now a delicate pink blush suffuses the more tardy oaks, while others are putting on a dress of yellow-green; and almost while we look we can see the yellow fading into deeper green. When the wild crab-apple puts forth blossoms it is helping to adorn the woods as the streets of the city are decorated for some festive occasion. The thorn-apple assists with blossoms of snowy whiteness, and blossoms so numerous that one would fain believe some lingering gust of winter day had whirled a million

snowflakes about the tree; and the redbud or Judas tree, unwilling to be outdone, not waiting for the leaves to unfurl, arrays itself in tints of reddish-purple.

But the wild crab is not satisfied with one tone, however handsome it may be. It paints the flower-leaves with white and pearl and pink and red in such exquisite shadings, and submerges them all in such a sea of perfume, through which one wades, by which one is drenched, as he comes near to the color-display, that he is intoxicated by the very beauty, the very fragrance. And the flowers, more modest in stature than the trees but more persistently numerous, are adding beauty and grace and life to the scene; anemones and shooting-stars, puccoon and phlox and columbine, colored pink and white and red and yellow are lending variety and gayety to the landscape. When the wild crab-apple puts forth blossoms, the birds are trooping through its branches, trooping through the forests. Describe them? Why, if one were to gather great handfuls of dandelion blossoms and bluebells and tulips and wake-robins, and throw them hither and thither

among the branches, he would not add new or more color than is already there because the birds are there: grosbeak and tanager, towhee and wood thrush, and warblers with yellow and red and black, with blue and white, with orange as bright as morning-dawn, with brown as deep as chestnut-stain.

Perhaps now that the wild crab-apple has put forth blossoms, the spring-fever is at its height, and bewildered and delirious the victim throws himself beneath its branches and scarcely breathes as he listens to the avian May festival. It is morning. During the night the carpet of green has been washed by the falling rain, and now it is vivid in brightness of green, set with limpid drops of water shining like silvery jewels. About him and overhead the trees are breaking the sunlight into flecks and scattering them on the ground. Behind him the brook is dancing down the riffles, playing with pebbles, working itself into foaméd frenzy as it uselessly beats against the rough-shouldered boulder, tossing some stray leaf as the waves of the sea toss the fisherman's boat, and the music of the water is throbbing in the background. The oriole is the

master of ceremonies, and while his orange-and-black cap and robe flash among the branches he mounts a twig and gives the trumpet-call to song. The soloists respond: the catbird from yonder thicket of thorny gooseberries, the wood thrush hiding behind the hazel-brush, the rose-ate grosbeak from the willow, the brown thrasher from the swaying elm; and there are the choruses, the gurgling notes of blackbirds, the batlike notes of goldfinches, the silvery-belled notes of bobolinks, and the choruses of warblers with dripping tones falling from the leafy foliage as thickly as the great drops of rain that fall like tinkling bells on the leaves of the trees. And the music is not sweeter and more resplendent than the robes they wear.

After a time he may stagger to his feet, may make his way homeward; but I mistake if there has not crowded in upon him the sense of over-whelming, abounding life. The streams are leaping with the accumulated energy of winter, and the banks will hardly contain the whirling, swerving waters. The trees seem full to over-flowing with life, so superabundant it must find a way out through twig and leaf. The birds

are full to overflowing with life; it must find a way out through quiver of wing and flitting of tail, and swelling throats that can not hold all the music and rhapsody contained—it spills out like bubbling waters from the spring. I mistake if one does not return in religious mood with an overwhelming sense of the nearness of God, the energy of God, the activity of God. All that God is doing is so fertile, so productive, so growing, so bubbling over with life; God is so near, so present, so crowding into all things He has made and through all things He has made, that instinctively I find myself recognizing Him in my life, feeling that He belongs in my life, acknowledging Him as my Maker and Keeper and Master.

I can see how some might not be brought to religious mood in the summer time when the sun burns with fiery rays, and the heat is oppressive, and the dry dust stifles the nostrils, though there is evidence enough here of God for those who are not so easily disturbed by these superficials. I can see how some might not be made religious by the autumn when the sky is drear with cloud and fog, and the shiver-

ing wind pierces to the very marrow, and the fields are brown and the leaves are dead and the flowers are withered, killed by the frost. I can see how some might not be thrown into religious mood by the biting, stinging wind of winter that nips the cheek and nose, that drives the frost against the window-panes until we can not look out upon the abandoned world, that drives the snow in great banks across the streets and roads, and piles it about our doors so that we can scarcely plow our ways through and would fain sit by the fireside, though there is ecstasy enough in each of these seasons for

> . . . "him who in the love of Nature holds
> Communion with her visible forms;" . . .

but it seems to me that a man is without mind and heart who is not moved to God in the spring time, when the wild crab-apple puts forth its blossoms and the redbud blooms by the swollen waters: mind given by God that a man may measure himself alongside of the abounding energy and life of God everywhere revealed in the spring time; mind given of God so that we are able to seek after Him and find Him and know Him and be grateful for His com-

panionship; heart given of God that we may measure up toward the glory of things; that we may be stirred to laughter, to ecstasy, to poetry, to music, to wonder, to worship; and that we may cry out, "O Mighty One, I have love for the world Thou hast made, and for Thee, the Maker of the world, love surpassing the love of man for woman."

Nature is a revealer of God; and to the theologian who thinks his craft is the interpreter of God and who scoffs at Nature's teachings or ignores them, I say that Nature is a better, more certain, more authoritative teacher of great principles of God than he is. I do not trust theology. Oh! I trust my own; for it is an honest attempt on my part to frame words that will tell of the relations existing or that might exist between my God and myself. Other theologians, professional or laymen, I assume, are equally honest; but they present such different ideas, I am confused by their endeavors at times. How many pictures of the Madonna or the Christ there are! what different interpretations there have been!—and none has told the whole story, has given the per-

fect likeness. I trust the love that is in the heart of the man who draws the portrait of God; yes, I will trust the love that is in the heart of the pagan; but I do not fully trust

THE REDBUD BLOOMS BY THE SWOLLEN WATERS

his judgment, his knowledge. I do not impute the motive, I impute the results that spring from imperfect knowledge.

What blunders and crimes have been committed in the name of theology! Folks have

mutilated their bodies by rites of circumcision until they could not defend their firesides. Children have been offered in sacrifice to the leaping flames or the greedy waters. Man by predestination has been robbed of his chance to make his peace with God; and babes snatched from their mothers' arms in all the sweetness and innocence and helplessness of babyhood, unbaptized, have been committed to the world of lost spirits. What crimes have been committed in the name of the Church! The Sanhedrin issued its decrees against Jesus and sent Him to the cross; Diana's followers cried out against the Christians of their day and mobbed them; the Pope of the Roman Church has anathematized men, and that Church has passed sentence of death upon many; the Puritans, ushering in a new and better reign of morality, issued their decrees against the Quakers and persecuted them; the Episcopalians ridiculed and opposed the work of the Methodists in their early day, and the Methodists ridiculed and opposed the work of the Salvation Army in its early day.

This is no argument against God: it is an argument against the imputed perfect wisdom

of man. It is no argument against the Church or theology: it is an argument against the wrong use and arrogant claims of these. A razor is essential for the happiness and pleasing appearance of man: but suicides have been committed with it. Gas is a blessing in the lighting of our homes and preparing of our meals: but it has destroyed the food and burned the house when improperly used. The theologian and the Church are necessary for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men: but they have missed their calling at times. Galileo was a helpful man, fighting God's battles for truth in the human mind: but he was woefully misunderstood and abused by the theologians of his day. God has been misrepresented and His cause has run with lame and halting feet because of imperfect man, sometimes ignorant, sometimes overzealous, and sometimes cruelly ambitious and selfish.

Theology is not the speaking of God to man, though it is often so understood. The Bible is God speaking to man, the Holy Spirit is God speaking to man, conscience is God speaking to man, nature is God speaking to man; theology

is man talking about God, speculating about God; and because man is imperfect and ignorant it is mistaken and imperfect, and will change and continue to change as the mingled dawn and dark of the morning twilight change into the perfect day. Let us be grateful for every honest endeavor of man to learn about God, and to tell us with all the wisdom of mind and fervor of heart he possesses about God; but let him not endeavor to supplant other sources of knowledge concerning God with the theology he has built, however helpful it may be.

When the wild crab-apple puts forth blossoms the world is revealing God as mighty Creator. It is saying what it has said every day since it came into being, "In the beginning, God." In the midst of the changing, building, growing world a man is transported to those first days sketched and outlined on the first pages of the Bible. He sees the building of the heavens, the building of the sun, the building of the earth, the finishing of the earth as the carpenter finishes the dwelling-house, until there are land and sea, mountains and valleys, forests and plains, waving grass and waving fronds of ferns

and waving branches of palm trees, and animals that creep and fly and run; and he, amazed and dumb and awe-stricken in the presence of it, sees God, the mighty God, the Master-Builder. He reads, "God made every tree to grow," and as he sees the springing trees putting forth leafage and blossoms and fruit he bows to God, the mighty God. If he listens too much to the word of some man he may shut his eyes and say that after God worked for a few days He rested; He finished the world, He started it going, and then went away and has never come back to look after it. But if he is a wise man, when the wild crab-apple puts forth blossoms he will make it a visit, will look at the growing trees, swelling waters, flitting birds, blossoming flowers, humming bees; and as he sees these things coming into being, and growing into larger being, again will he be amazed and dumb and awe-stricken, and in the presence of it he will see God, the mighty God, the PRESENT Master-Builder.

Nature shows that God is at work NOW. He works nights as well as days, Sundays as well as week-days. There is as much rain and

sunshine and singing of birds and building of their nests while we worship as while we toil in the shop or field. And have you not heard the corn growing during the night? and have you not seen the leaves unfurled with the coming of the dawn as banners are unfurled by the breeze? Here is no excuse for man. Here is no argument against the Sabbath day or the eight-hour law. Man is not built on a twenty-four-hour schedule or a seven-day-a-week plan. He needs a portion of the day for other work than his regular job: for the home, society, self-improvement. He needs the Sabbath for rest and worship, the reading and study of the Bible, more uninterrupted communion with God, attendance upon church-services, doing of acts of mercy. If man finds his highest joy in jaunts to parks and out-of-door pleasures, then he is merely an animal, a beast of the field.

But nature is not an end in itself, is not the highest aim of man: it is the revealer of God; and it shows Him always interested, always present with and always caring for the things He has made. It denies that He is dead or sleeping or gone upon a journey. If my heart

aches because of the burdens and disappointments of life, as I look upon Him busied with His creatures, He comes into my heart

> "With a mild and healing sympathy, that steals away
> Its sharpness, ere I am aware."

Yes, the Lord rested then, and He rests now; His strength is so boundless, His burden is so light, there is such joy in His labor, such certainty of the perfect work that shall one day have proceeded forth from His hands. As I see Him in His world I cry out in wonder: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches."

Nature suggests and proves God. I know some of the technical playing with words by which philosophers may confuse us and assert that it is impossible to prove God. Maybe so; but I know the satisfaction of my own mind and heart that can not be taken away with technical subterfuges. I speak to the common, hard-thinking man, and say that Nature will strongly argue for God and prove God. Here is revealed matchless COMPREHENSION that runs

into perfect WISDOM. I am sure this is God's world; there is so much of it.

There was a time when I might have named several hundred plants growing about here, giving common and scientific names; but most of the names have gone and many of the faces have become strangers to me, so that I do not recognize those that once were friends, when I meet them in the woodland or meadow or marsh. My mind is so small and feeble that other things coming in have demanded and have taken the room. Now assume what has never existed: a human brain big enough to carry all the names of all the plants that grow in every corner of the world, and to know something of their habits and their processes of growth; it would be in dense ignorance of other departments of thought and knowledge. But a human brain does not exist big enough so that we would think of imputing comprehension to it even of the plant-world. It may be suggestive of such a brain, but nothing more; it may bear resemblance to a brain mighty enough to comprehend all things, as the brain of a babe that has grown enough so that it recognizes its mother's face

bears resemblance to the brain of a Blaine or a La Follette who recognizes the faces of countless people. But as I look upon this world I say that who is Creator of it must have a mind big enough to number and name all the stars and flowers and beetles and birds and all things that are made, and not only to name them but to know about them, whence they came, how they live and grow and multiply, and whither they are going. I am in the presence of Matchless Comprehension, I am in the presence of God.

I am sure this is God's world because of the SKILL displayed in it. Now, I am not ignorant of man's devices; I glory in his progress, and I believe that he will go on to the heights as he learns more of God and His world; but how bungling in comparison with the skill displayed by God in the world He has made. Only this week I marveled at man's inventiveness displayed by the welcome given to the commander of our battleships by the fleet which awaited him, having been warned of his coming by the weird power of wireless telegraphy. And yet, how complicated it is! The operator

must be on duty; must have his equipment properly, skillfully adjusted (how easily it gets out of order!); must catch the waves of ether and translate them into language and transmit them to proper authorities. These, in turn, must issue orders, must have certain sign-flags hung out; they must be seen by the lookouts on other ships, and translated and reported to the officers, who in turn must issue orders. Finally, and it is wonderful, the fleet is deployed to welcome the vessel of the commander who telegraphed his coming. But how bungling in comparison with the flocks of birds God has made, who somehow can instantaneously communicate their thoughts from leader to every bird in the great flock, so that every order is executed in faultless fashion. The phonograph, marking one of man's great achievements, is a wonderful instrument, catching, making impressions of, giving forth again the sounds as they have come to it from human throat; but who would think of comparing it to the catbird that God has made with mechanism so delicate, and what is much more, with spirit so exuberant and overflowing that it mounts the bush and fills

the air with its perfect sweetness. The printing-press, taking the raw, blank paper and giving it forth printed and folded and bound, is a wonderful mechanism; but how crude as compared to the living organism with lungs and heart, with brain and sensory organs. I do not degrade man: he has done marvelous things; but I exalt God, the Maker of man and Inspirer of man and all that is.

I am sure of God because of life and growth. In the presence of these we are in utter ignorance. Oh! we can tell something of the appearance, the conduct, the manners of life and growth; but in their finalities they are utterly nonunderstandable. Now, if we knew all of the processes of life and in what fashion it came to be, we should not eliminate God as Creator: we would simply understand a little better how He did things; they betray a superhuman Power. As I stand in the presence of these things and see the ebbing and swelling of life and other forms of Nature's display, and see in them the eternal, immutable God, and recognize my relationship to Him, eternity and immortality become more certain and more real.

The eternal God is the beginning and the end of all things; the world is growing up to the goal which He has planned for it; the eternal God is the goal of man; toward Him we aspire, toward Him we run or climb. This world with all that it contains, and man with all his powers endowed to have dominion over the world, is an evidence of God's purpose and love.

So, this May day, as I look at the beauty of the crab-apple blossoms that adorn these tables in the sanctuary, and as I revel in the fragrance that comes from these dainty blossoms and permeates this temple like the incense of old, I praise God for the world He has made and beautified and adorned with flower and bird, and I thank Him for the love He bears the children of men as shown in providing them with this wonderful home, and I thank Him for the Christ, the Son of God, who came with abounding life, perfect life, and matchless love, that He might find us and show us the way to knowledge of God and faith and trust and companionship. When I stand in the midst of the wild crab-apple blossoms I do not stand alone. Nearer than the color and fragrance of

the flowers, "nearer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," is my blessed Master, my Christ who walks abroad with me and helps me to know the world and love the world; for it is His and I am His, and He is mine.

II

NATURE-INTERPRETATION OF JOB

NATURE-INTERPRETATION OF JOB

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."—Genesis 1.

II

"WHERE wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?"—JOB 38:4.

GOD is spokesman, Job is listener, and the text is from a dialogue in the Book of Job, with God and man as speakers. This is one of the great books of the Bible. If the novelist tells us that the essentials of a good story are a distinguished hero, plenty of excitement, difficulty and uncertainty, and a successful termination of the hero's career, the conditions are here fulfilled. As literature, this drama with its choice language and stirring action is worthy of a place among the world's notable writings, for it deals with the deepest issues of life. And the man who is concerned about the relationship that exists or ought to exist between God and man finds here much food for thought. As a story, as literature, as philosophy, as a religious work, it is a great book, worthy of the place it occupies in the "Book of books."

But it has not held and does not hold its place without contention and debate. With the possible exception of the Book of Jonah, there is perhaps no other in the Bible that has been the center of such bitter discussion, the subject of so many harsh accusations. It reminds me of some mighty rock along the North Atlantic Coast. Standing on the shore-line with crags and woods behind it, thrusting defiantly into the ocean, rearing its majestic form above land and sea, it might be such a scene of beauty, it might inspire such repose and peace. But this is always denied by the surrounding elements. Often the clouds gather about its brow, and break in snow or rain, and the fog seems always there. If there are moments when the fog is lifting and the sun is about to enkindle the place with its brightness, the fog gathers again, more densely than before, and comes rolling in to obscure the view. Often the fierce winds drive across the seas, and the huge waves, sullen, gray and somber, smite against the rock with blows of Titan's fists. And always the rough waters are growling and gnawing at the rock's foundation. And one hears the poet's word:

"Break, break, break
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me."

The day is dead because of cloud and fog and wind and wave. So for many generations this book has been the center of acrimonious debate, the subject of bitter attacks, of heated controversy, and has been wrapped in fogs of obscure and involved meaning. Its right to a place in the Bible has been denied. The argument is something like this: Job was not a Jew. He lived in the land of Uz, lying somewhere to the southeast of Palestine, and was perhaps a Sabean or Chaldean. Now, the Bible, or the Old Testament particularly, is a history of God's dealings with the Jews. They are His chosen people, and it is the baldest effrontery for anybody not a Jew to have a place claimed for him in that Book.

It is the same argument to which we have been listening during these recent days. Word has gone out that President Taft expects to appoint a certain Boston lawyer as one of the Federal attorneys. Immediately there is a protest, but not against the man's ability. He is

amply proficient in his profession; he will be able to safeguard the Government's interests as entrusted to him, with credit. His reputation is unsullied. He is an honorable man. Why then the protest? "Why, he is a black man, and black men have no right to know law and have brains and be honorable. These distinctions God has given to the white race, and the black man is a usurper and an intruder." Now, if the argument is sound, of course the same reasoning will eliminate the Book of Job from the Old Testament; but if ability is to be the measure of a man's rank, and if every man is to have a chance to show his worth and ability, and if the Bible is true in declaring that "God is no respecter of persons," and Jesus true when He insisted that the children of Abraham are measured not by ties of flesh and blood, but rather by obedience and service,—then this book with its lofty religious note and with its hero, a God-fearing man, is worthy of the place it occupies.

Again, there has been and is bitter disputing as to whether Job is a real character. Some insist that he was an actual man, while others

with equal vehemence insist that the book is a story and that Job is a fictitious character. Around this question, what a storm has prevailed! On the one hand the Churchman has assured us that unless we can substantiate the position that Job is a real man, the Church is doomed. Let me state the position strongly and baldly, that we may see it clearly. "If Job was not a real man the Bible can not be trusted, for it so represented him; and if the Bible can not be trusted at one point it can not be at any point; and if the Bible is unauthentic we have no record of God, and we are living in densest ignorance, with the Church and Kingdom built upon the sand and doomed to fall." On the other hand we are told that "nobody with intelligence believes that Job was a real man. It is an oriental story, with all the embellishments of the eastern writers, and just a little thought and study and investigation would satisfy any one that this is so. Why, for anybody to believe that Job actually lived, in this day of modern knowledge, shows a lack of brains." And this is very distressing to some of us who believe that Job actually lived, or at

least may have lived, in outline as the book suggests. Our conceit is disturbed when we are accused of ignorance because we hold a different theory from some other man. Here again the battle is mainly between straw-men, and the worthy point of consideration is being overlooked.

After all, it does not matter whether such a man lived ages ago. Make that man unique or shut him away from our day, and we have no interest in him. Our interest is in the men of our day. And the preacher can tell you that in his parish Job is not a fictitious character; he can tell you of men and women whose misfortunes may not have been of the same name but of the same kind, misfortunes so keen and overwhelming as to try the very foundations of the soul. And the question with which we are concerned is this: When a man is so shaken, is God near enough and accessible enough so that it is possible for the man in his bitterness to find Him, so that he will not suffer shipwreck? The storms about this book are man-made and of little account. The mighty truths of God are upon its pages.

NATURE-INTERPRETATION OF JOB

This book has been studied by eminent scholars, it has been variously interpreted from many viewpoints, each school of theology has been able to find vindication on its pages. While the discussion is going on, and while our friends are arriving at some unanimous verdict, let me give you an interpretation this morning that is plain, simple, practical and, I trust, helpful. If it is not the common interpretation, I appeal to you as to a jury whether it is not a reasonable one and whether a re-reading of the book will not convince you of its credence.

Broadly speaking, the book divides itself into three parts. The first represents the afflictions of the man: lightning scatters the flock, the enemy destroys the property, death removes the children, and the heart of Job is filled with sorrow and questioning and despair and bitterness. The second part represents the visitation of three friends, perhaps a Church committee, who have heard of the grief of Job and have come to console him. Whether a formal Church committee or not, they come with the beliefs of the Church of their day. They are the theologians of their time. But their visit

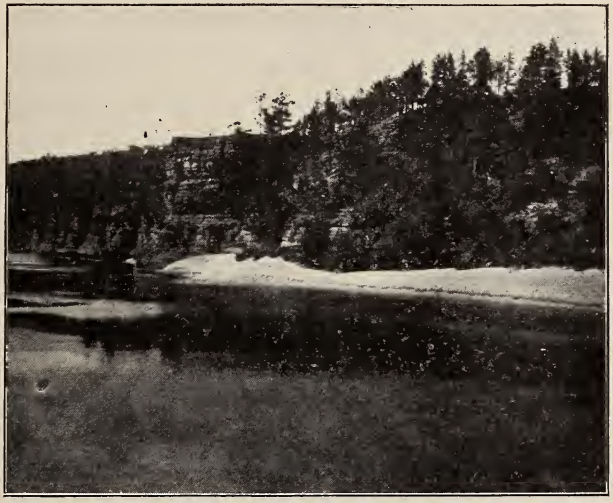
is fruitless and injurious. Each one states his conviction, but these convictions do not agree, and Job is only puzzled and confused by their endeavors. Moreover, it is one man's opinion against another's; and when one of them slaps Job in the face by accusing him of being a sinner, a very wicked man, Job strikes back, and the result of the interview is to make Job more bitter and angry and resentful. Then another man appears, and I think of him as one of the shepherds of Job perhaps, who had watched his flocks in the surrounding fields and there had learned the ways of God. At the first he offers his own ideas to Job, as the others had done, and it has the same effect upon Job apparently. Then he directs the attention of Job to God's world of Nature about him, and retires from the scene.

The third part represents God and Job face to face in the world. Job is contemplating Nature. He sees now the things at hand, and thinks about them: the cloud and rain and snow; the frost and ice; the stars and constellations in the sky above. He sees now with new meaning the greater world in which he lives.

In yonder places he sees the ostrich which buries its eggs in the sand and allows the heat of the sun-warmed sand to hatch them while it runs footraces with the Arab of the desert, and thus entices the horseman from its nest, because God has taught it so much. He sees with new meaning the behemoth or hippopotamus, strong and fearless, with bones like iron because God has made it so. He sees now the leviathan or crocodile with its fiery eyes and scaléd sides, proof against man's weapons, and with marvelous speed as it travels the waters. And as Job contemplates these wonders of Nature he learns as he had never learned from human lips the plan and purpose and ability of God; he sees obedience everywhere, everywhere. Then, too, God has a purpose and plan for him, and God is able to accomplish that purpose; then he will be obedient and submissive to God in everything. And as in obedient spirit he bows before God, resignation and peace and prosperity await him. Job is saved from his temptation and despair by his contemplation of Nature. Job is not unique. His experience may be the experience of the man of our day.

This world is full of marvelous things. The wonders of Nature are everywhere about us, fortunately available to every man. People travel far and wide to see Nature's displays: the Niagara Falls, Yellowstone National Park, Garden of the Gods, the Alps in Switzerland, the Rhine in Germany, the Italian skies, Scotland's lochs, and Norway's firths. For those who are able, it is commendable, but is chiefly necessary because these travelers usually take off their "seeing" glasses when they return to their homes. One does not need to go abroad to be overwhelmed by the majesty of Nature. The man tracking the plow in the field or driving the cows to pasture is in the very midst of Nature's supreme efforts. The man who walks the hard pavement of the city has the universe within his reach; and if he can only find a spot of sward upon which to plant his foot, will find beneath it such a collection of Nature's works as to afford him material for study and contemplation for all his days without exhausting its contents. Even the invalid confined to the room, through the open window by day can watch the ever-shifting clouds now piling them-

selves along the horizon like some great city of modern times or like the ruins of some ancient one, and now a fleecy lightness and whiteness drifting lazily across the sky, and again



WONDERS OF NATURE

like some great, dark battleships moving to war as they are driven madly by the wind. Or one may see the gorgeous sunset, when the western sky is belted with broad bands of rose and blue and purple and sapphire. And at night, through the same window, one can look into

the heights of the sky and watch the great globe so thickly studded with stars and set with constellations slowly moving, ever moving with the earth in the center of it; or one may climb the heights and, as imagination runs riot, wonder as he gazes at the tiniest, farthest star whether if he should speed all his days as fast as man can go, whether some day he might reach that star and bring it to earth and put it in his box of playthings—and forget that it is already there.

People came long distances to our city to see the wonderful flying-machine, and then were denied because the breeze blew. But the other day, while the wind in mad gusts swept the heavens, I looked far up and saw there a wonderful flying-machine—the red-shouldered hawk—sailing in majestic circles, holding steadily against the wind or easing away before it, with moving wing or with stationary wing, it did not matter. Here was perfect grace and perfect rhythm and perfect freedom, for it was master of the sky and wind, and can be seen from your doorstep. And in the suburbs of the city I have watched great numbers of flying-

machines—some species of plover, perchance—spring into the air, fly in quick circles, wheel short, swoop, speed away, alight only a few inches apart, and never a collision and never an accident; and this can be seen from the window of the street-car. Men will make long journeys to see the launching of a great ship, and watch with curiosity and breathless interest to see whether man's efforts will be successful. But the launching of a baby bird in your yard, when the time to leave the nest has come, is more fascinating, more wonderful, more certain. Travelers go to the Nile to see the lotus-bloom and to catch its fragrance; but the marshes of our fields grow the white water-lily, as entrancing in beauty, as delicious in odor. The wonders of Nature are everywhere; they are here at hand, for the instruction of man concerning God.

And they are in our presence ALL THE TIME. When the day is on, there is the bewitching tracery of foliage, there are flowers of innumerable kinds and inexhaustible beauty, and the birds are about with the throats swelling with song. And when the night comes, the soft

moonlight may chasten and subdue the earth, the stars look down in gentleness like the gentle eyes of kine. And if all alone, away from city's blare of trumpets, away from "the madding crowd," one may hear the music of the night—not the shriller note of cricket, not the louder, accidental note of some wandering bird, but the more quiet, subdued, insistent music of the night. When all is so still that the blood flowing about the ear seems to leap and dash like distant waterfall, then this music seems to ooze out of the very stars above and air about and soil beneath our feet.

When the sun shines, the shadows are chasing one another in childish glee across the fields of billowing grain; or in the forest, the sunlight falls in scattered flakes upon the ground. When the day is dark one stands perhaps beneath some woodland tree and listens to the music as the drops of rain come pattering down upon the leaves or drip from leafy stems, or hears the liquid globules of music as the great drops fall upon the face of the lingering pond of the creek, and sees the flower that has closed so that the rain shall not beat it in the face,

and sees some feathered forest-dweller hanging to the side of the tree beneath a limb and away from the storm, dry and cozy, fitting comrade for such a day.

When winter comes and the leaves are fallen, the trees are at their best and display their true beauty, the oak so straight and sturdy and rugged and soldier-like, the elm so graceful and delicate and almost coy; and then the snow-storm, when the great flakes fall like autumn leaves, or when the fierce wind piles into fantastic shapes, and the buds containing leaf and flower and fruit for another year are tucked to bed to sleep throughout the winter, more daintily than any mother's hands ever tucked human babe away. And when the spring comes the wonders do not cease. The winter fumes and frets and ever keeps its face toward the southland, and ever retreats with snarling lips to the northland.

And the spring comes on, and the grass is growing and the flowers are blooming and the birds are singing; ah me! the wonders of spring time! And the spring has gone and the summer has come, and we scarcely knew it; but the

wonders have not ceased. And now the fields are waving with grain, and the orchard-boughs are bending with growing fruit, and the road-sides are resplendent with bloom; the summer is here, but the wonders have not ended. And the summer, almost before we know it, has faded into autumn, and the fields are mown, and the corn is rustling in the slightest breeze, and the cheeks of apples are painted with gaudy hues; for the wonders have not ceased.

And it seems NOW, for autumn is here, as though there could not be a time of year when there were such wonders and so many wonders as now. The farmer makes his slow way along the rows of standing corn, and the thud of golden ears comes across the field, sweet music singing of God's bountifulness to the children of men. And the piles of ruddy apples 'neath barren trees is proof enough that God knew His business when He wrapped the buds in winter time and flung the leaves to the breezes in spring time and grew the fruit in summer time and brought it to its fulness in autumn time. And the gorgeous colors hang upon the trees as though, before God had stripped the branches

for future plans to be executed, He would leave with us a pleasant memory against the coming of the leaves again.

How dare I speak of autumn glories? In the city of Chicago there is now a splendid art-exhibit. Masters of many nationalities are represented, and there are some of their finest works, a galaxy of art showing the cunning of man's hands, the genius of man's brain, the warmth of man's heart. Any one having the opportunity would gladly see the splendid display of paintings. But it was my privilege recently to see an exhibit of far-surpassing beauty. It was during the session of our Annual Conference. I enjoy the company of preachers and enjoy listening to their lectures and addresses and debates; but there was no time for that: there was too much work handling the benevolence money. But there was time enough to slip down to the bridge spanning Rock River for a few minutes, two or three times each day, and lose myself for that length of time in Nature's art gallery. As I stood, with arms on the railing of the bridge, forgetful of my surroundings, some passer-by may have thought

that I contemplated suicide. The only trouble with his thinking was that it was too slow. I had already ceased to realize my existence; I was swallowed up, was lost in the great world about me.

But this was what I saw. There were many islands in the river carpeted with rich green grass, appearing like so many emeralds in a broad ribbon of silver. Man had thrown an obstruction across the river. But the waters, disdaining and scorning the hindrance, leaped across the barrier, throwing themselves triumphantly into silver spray; or seizing upon the wandering rays of light, tore them into fragments and adorned the spray with the colors of the rainbow. On one bank near at hand was a mass of tangled bittersweet. Already the leaves, turned yellow, were sifting to the ground, detached by the slightest effort; but every falling leaf but made more plain and more resplendent the berries that lingered. The frost had put its icy fingers upon the outer orange caskets, and these had opened and spread apart, showing the ruby-red berry within, bright as coral beads. On the other bank was a patch of

sumach flaunting its flaming plumes of crimson leaves and garnet berries. Farther away sullen bluffs outcropped, and the banks and larger islands were covered with trees. Already the reds and browns and russets were creeping across the face of the foliage, but it was a few days too early to see these colors at their best. This was particularly an exhibit of yellows, and they were here of every shade and tint. The distance was such that one did not try to distinguish the particular tree or bush or shape of leaf. It was sufficient to see the rich display of tints, and these were ever-changing. Every added visit revealed new beauties. The colors were becoming deeper and richer. There was no startling change, but as by the hand of man one stereopticon picture dissolves into another, so here by the matchless skill of God one picture grew out of another; the green was dissolving into yellow, the yellow into gold. It was evident that while I was away the Master-Painter was not away, but was busy with paints, changing, enriching, and adding new beauty to the scene. And the flood of light from noonday sun, the slanting rays of twilight sun, the

dullness of hazy day, the calmness of quiet air, the stirring of breeze upon leaf and river made even more changing an ever-changing panorama.

"Well, what has all this to do with the Church? What difference does it make to Christianity and noble character and to knowledge of God that leaves are green or red, and there are clouds in the sky, and flowers under foot? Of what use is Nature to the religious welfare of man?" My contention is that the contemplation of Nature was good for Job and gave him essential knowledge of God; and the contemplation of Nature is good for me and, I am sure, for any man with open eyes and sympathetic mind.

Here is convincing proof of God's ABILITY. If God is able to number the stars, to marshal them into constellations, to lead them in troops across the sky, to sow them thick as snowflakes in the "milky way," and to keep them in their courses, then I do not doubt but that God is able to be Master of this human world, and to work His will, and to rule in the affairs of nations and cause them to do His bidding. And

if sometimes the nation seems indisposed or unconcerned or "mindful of the things of low degree," I will not be cast down, for God is ABLE. And if God can do so much with so little to do with, if God can with a tiny, insignificant acorn make the great oak with sturdy branches and abundant leafage and bounteous fruitage, causing that acorn to burst asunder its prison-house and to conquer every hindrance, then I do not doubt but that God is able to save the very lowest man, do not doubt that there is enough good even there, with God's help and support, to grow into a noble, useful life; and that, no matter what the prison-house may be, or what chains may bind or barriers intervene, there is hope for that man, and salvation is possible: for God is ABLE.

Here, too, is convincing proof of God's PURPOSE. Nature is not a world of chance or carelessness or uselessness. Everything has its mission. The very shape and color and fragrance of the flower are not accidental and do not reveal mere passing whims of a Creator. Everything in Nature is significant and purposeful. And as one sees this and realizes this beyond

shadow of doubt, the conclusion is plain: there is some reason for my being, my existence. I am a part of God's world and of God's plan. And in proportion as my rank is high among God's creatures, so am I sure that that purpose is a worthy and fitting one.

Here is example enough and proof enough as to the necessity of OBEDIENCE to God. It is obedience everywhere. The mightiest sun, the tide of ocean, the blade of grass, the drop of dew, the mote that dances in streaming sunlight, reveal absolute obedience to the will of God. Here is law, majestic and unbroken. Here is respect for law, implicit and unquestioned. And here is argument and inspiration that man, master of his destiny, is doing the wise and necessary thing when he yields himself to the law and will of God.

Above your desks on the office-wall or on the walls of your homes perhaps there are Rothschild's maxims, or other maxims, urging frugality, diligence, perseverance, cheerfulness, or other attributes that make for success and honor and happiness in life. God's maxims and mottoes and sermons are printed upon every leaf

and every flower and every cloud and every star. They are everywhere, and only the blind man or the perverted man can fail to read. Here is unquestionable proof for Bible texts. If Jesus commanded the disciples to gather up the crumbs after He had made loaves beyond compute, and so urged frugality, Nature is preaching the value of the fragments constantly, using the dead leaf to protect the living plant from the cold, using the dew to refresh the vegetation. If the Bible insists that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and man is always disputing it, Nature proves it beyond dispute. We can not gather "grapes from thorns or figs from thistles." The great principles of the religious life find in Nature proof or verification. It is God's world; and God, who laid the foundation of it in the beginning, is still laying the foundations and building the walls and adorning the rooms. Man is in it, but man need not be of it; and the question, sharp as any spear-point which God asked of Job, is asked of you this day, Where art thou when God is laying the foundations of the earth?

While men might be learning about God from Nature, some of them are deliberately or ignorantly destroying its wonders. At the close of the Annual Conference it was my privilege to visit my boyhood home and to drive over the road where as a boy I had walked out of the village to the country school, or to the woods where I spent many happy boyhood hours. There was a sadness to the day because of the changes that had been wrought. There had been a broad stone-fence made of shale-rock, and it had been one of our boyish tricks, barefooted, to run along the top and balance ourselves as we ran; and so we developed the cunning of the squirrel; here the woodchuck had its burrow, and as we ran and played it stood erect like a soldier and whistled, and then, like a coward, pitched headlong into its burrow. And here sometimes we saw the weasel, and in winter the dainty footprints of the deerfooted mouse. But the stone-fence had disappeared, and in its place was a barb-wire fence; for the stone wall took too much room. Another furrow of ground must be turned, that a little more corn might be raised for the fattening of a few

more hogs. And there had been a rail-fence, sprawling roomily along the road, clambered over with bittersweet and carrion-flower and leathery clematis; in the corners of it grew the hazel-brush and the wild roses, and there the bloodroot and yellow violet and adder's tongue bloomed; and the chipmunk with banded sides saucily ran along the rails, and the downy woodpecker hunted for food as nonchalantly as though we were not in existence or—sly rascal—pretended to be hunting for food in the crannies of the rails; and once a little chickadee hollowed out a home in the heart of a rail, and there laid its delicately-spotted eggs and reared its young. The rail-fence taught us many of Nature's secrets, but it is gone now, and in its place a woven-wire fence. It took too much room. Two or three additional furrows of ground must be turned, that a little more corn might be raised for the fattening of a few more hogs. And there had been a hedge-fence of osage-orange trees. In the autumn we had gathered the yellow-green oranges as ornaments for the clock-shelf. Here, always, the brown thrasher nested, and the butcher bird and the

robin and the catbird and the goldfinch. And in the winter the rabbit made its bunk in the long grass that grew unmolested among the trees. And I have sometimes caught the rabbit asleep, and with boyish shout leaped upon it, and watched it spring away with long leaps, frightened and ashamed that it had been thus surprised. The hedge-fence is gone now, and in its place there is nothing; for there must be more room for the growing of corn for the fattening of hogs. And there had been a wild crab-apple thicket, where the bluejays nested and scolded us and cried, "G'way, g'way!" In the spring the branches were festooned with pink and white, and the air was redolent with precious perfume, and in the autumn the ground was strewn with tantalizing fruit. During the summer, as we saw the growing apples, we planned to store them for the winter. But somehow we never did—after we tasted one. And there was a slough where the redwing blackbirds nested, and where the booming bitterns reared their young, and where in the winter the rabbits bunked and the prairie-hens roosted. I had flushed them by hundreds, or watched them

walking on the snow and feeding on the scattered ears of corn that had been overlooked in husking-time. But all of this is changed now. The wild crabs are gone, and the slough is

THE BOOMING BITTERNS REARED THEIR YOUNG

drained, that a little more corn may be raised. We must be well-fed and grow fat; but as progress, agriculturally speaking, has slowly made its way across the land it has destroyed many things that fed the mind and heart. And I submit that there is danger of our being so much

concerned about growing fat in body that we forget the needs of the mind and soul.

If some men are destroyers, others are blind, walking in the midst of Nature's wonders, standing in the midst of Nature's truths, and not seeing. And this, I think, had been the fault of Job. Good man that he was, careful to make his sacrifices and concerned about the welfare of his children, still he had been unimpressed by the great lessons taught by God's world. The servants had reported that there were seven thousand sheep; and Job said, "It has been a good year; there were but six thousand a year ago." They had said, "There are three thousand camels;" and he had said, "It is a good year; there were but two thousand a year ago." As though the goodness of a year and the worth of a year could be measured by the increase of the flocks or the possessions. Yet, how many are measuring life by such standards, counting life to consist of the "abundance of things it possesseth," remembering God perhaps for a few minutes on the Sabbath day, making sacrifices before the altar regularly perhaps, but

devoting the greater time to the things of the body; reading God's word on written page, and listening to the sermon as a message from God from the pulpit, and making confession of Christ, and then going out into God's world, where God's truth is written, and where God's sermons are preached, and where God is always present making it a holy world, and forgetting that it is God's world and that God is in it, and making it only a market-place, a feeding-place for swine, a place where the body is cared for, but where mind and heart are ignored?

I do not plead for less observance of the Sabbath, and less regard for the Church and the Christ, and less time devoted to prayer and reading of Bible; but I do plead for such a recognition of this world as God's world and for such removal of blindness and for such desire for the enrichment of mind and the cultivation of heart that every day shall be a holy day, that every hill shall be a temple, that every thing that is shall be a preacher of God's majesty and glory. Then will we be ever mindful of God's presence. Then shall come to pass

the saying that is written, "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

III

IMPOSSIBLE SONGS OF NATURE AND REDEMPTION

IMPOSSIBLE SONGS OF NATURE AND REDEMPTION

"PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heaven: praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: fire, and hail; snow, and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling His word: mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Praise ye the Lord."—PSALM 148.

"BEHOLD the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"—MATTHEW 6:26-30.

"ARE not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."—MATTHEW 10:29-31.

III

"No man could learn that song."—Revelation 14:3.

JOHN declares that there are songs beyond the power of man to sing, and songs which are possible only for the regenerate man. For the text, continued, reads, "No man could learn that song but the redeemed." It is not a distortion of the text, I am sure, to say that there are songs which only God can teach, and which therefore lead us directly and simply to see Him and worship Him. And I wish, this morning, that we might notice and might listen to the songs of Nature, the singing of the brook, the singing of the birds, the song of the night, and listen to the songs of the human heart, whose music has sweetened and cheered the world because God has caused it to be.

John is no doubter of man's ability, is not seeking to discredit or belittle the possibilities or deeds of man. In this book he has written he speaks of the achievements of kings and na-

tions, and declares that these are not ignored by God, but will be one of the possessions and appreciations of heaven.

John is not challenging man's powers. There are pessimists enough in this world to do that, to declare that man has reached his limit, that there is no new thing under the sun, that man is like a ship with a broken rudder, drifting at the mercy of wind and tide. How often these gloomy orators are discomfited! These doubters said that the ocean could not be crossed, that it would swallow its victims or hurl them over its straight-standing edge to destruction; and Columbus with puny ships and poor equipment and timid seamen, but boundless faith, put out to sea and proved that it could be done, and became the first naturalized American. These doubters said that ships could not be propelled through the water, driven against wind and tide by steam; and Fulton proceeded to demonstrate that it could be done. Doubting ones from the time of Darius Green have ridiculed the idea that the air could be navigated by men, and lo! while they sneer and scoff and speak of those who have died in the attempt,

Bleriot wings his way across the channel and drops down on English soil; and Curtis and the Wright brothers come home from France with breasts covered with medals and pockets bulg-

THE SINGING OF THE BROOK

ing with money—visible proof of man's ability to do. While scoffers were saying that the north pole never could be reached, men of courage said that it could be done. And if one of our countrymen came back with the marks of fraud upon him, another returned—Peary,

the American, lugging the north pole under his arm. The testimony of libraries and art-galleries, the biographies of men and nations, the echoes that are wafted from every age and come floating across the centuries unite in saying, "It can be done; it can be done." Man is so great, his achievements are so notable that it is hardly safe to say what he can not do. And sometimes in our pride or ignorance we feel that he can do everything, that he can sing every song.

God must be proud of His children at times. Oh! there are times enough when He has no occasion to be proud; when man is refusing to be great or to do the great things; when man is drunken, and manhood has been swallowed up in beastliness; when man is cruel and oppressive, and brotherhood has been swallowed up in selfishness; when man is lustful and profane, bitter and cynical, ignorant and indolent, squandering time and talent and opportunity. Oh! then God is humiliated and disgraced. But when man is at his best, keen-eyed to see the task, strong-hearted to attempt the task, brawny-armed or brawny-brained to do the

task, then God must be pleased with His children. For God wrote the problems and told men to solve them. God wrote the problem of the mighty sea, the frozen north, the shifting tide, the fickle air, wrote the problem containing an "X," an unknown quantity, and fired man's heart and brain with ambition to solve it. And man's part is to supply the missing term, steam or electricity or gravitation, by discovery or invention. And when man shows shrewdness and brain-force and patience and perseverance and grit and energy and sacrifice to work the problem, God is surely pleased with him.

And man ought to be grateful to God for problems to work and for talents to work with, for the development that comes with work; for without it muscles remain puny and flaccid, and brain remains in ignorance and impotence. He ought to be grateful for the teaching-ways of God, pointing, directing, suggesting, in the moments of man's bewilderment so that he can prevail, can overcome. For man can not do these things without God's help, either to provide the opportunity or to endow him with the

talents, however undeveloped, with which it may be improved. And for very gratitude for these blessings man ought to be a Christian, ought to realize his dependence upon God, acknowledge his dependence, and be obedient to God in every way. And most of all, we ought to live the godly life, growing a character like the blessed Master, Son of God. For God's supremest purpose is not the building of oceans to sail, or mountains to climb, or forests to penetrate, but the building of a race of men worthy to be called His sons, to abide with Him forever. And man's crowning achievement is not the exploring of a desolate land, the discovery of the north pole, the building of a flying-machine, however meritorious these may be; but his supremest achievement is the enthronement of Jesus Christ in the heart and the conquering of the passions and the directing of them until Christ is Master of the life. Man is so great in possibility and achievement that we do not wonder at the psalmist crying: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and

honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands."

John is making no attempt to discredit man, but he does recognize his limitations, which are apparent enough. The earth is huge, colossal; but it has boundaries. The ocean extending from pole to pole, stretches away before us day after day as we sail, challenging our powers of imagination, seeming limitless; but the ocean is held in leash by the great continents; it may thunder against the rocky coasts of Maine and Newfoundland, it may heap itself into great tides or work itself into a frenzy of waves, and may thrust the shore-line back a brief span; but there are limits beyond which it can not go, there are regions it can not traverse, heights it can not climb. And so it is with man. However great the range of his powers, whatever impression he may make upon the boundaries of ignorance and sin that seek to crowd in upon him and narrow his attainments: there are fixed boundaries beyond which he can not go, heights to which he can not climb; there are songs he can not sing, and other songs he can sing only with the help of Christ.

There are the impossible songs of Nature. There are innumerable songs beyond the powers of man to emulate, but not beyond his powers to enjoy and appreciate.

In the bird-world there is melody as prevalent as the fragrance of flowers. I speak today of the song of the roseate grosbeak, one of the remarkable soloists of our country, because I heard his singing yesterday. I was upon an errand to a neighbor's house; but as I turned from the street to the door, such music was wafted from a tree in the yard I forgot my errand and that here was a yard where I was a trespasser; and with hat in hand, out of deference to the ability of the songster, I drew near to listen. You recall that this was autumn-singing. In the spring, when the birds return, there is such satiety of music, for it is the time of love and wooing; and lady grosbeaks, however plain and simple they appear to us in their drab garments, fill the breasts of their mates so full of music it can not be contained. It seems to spill out like the bubbling over of a spring, and the very atmosphere of spring lends itself to the making of melody. But this is

autumn. Behind us are weeks of intensely hot weather. We have been stifled with heat and strangled with dust. And the birds are wearied from the exertions of the summer: building nests, brooding eggs, searching persistently for food for those ever-gaping mouths, patiently caring for their young, so wearied they have forgotten to sing. And they have had their understanding that song and love would be put aside until another spring had come.

And here was a bird in full song, not singing for a mate or to the spring, but singing a farewell song to linger during the winter as a fragrant memory. It was like a farewell kiss from one you love about to go on a long journey. It was a good-bye and a pledge that it would come again to gladden our hearts with its music. It was a rare moment. The colors of the bird were strikingly distinct, beating upon the eyeball as the big drops of rain beat upon the face. The delicate pink of the wild rose was upon its breast; the more delicate pink that blushes the apple-blossom, beneath its wings; below, as white as the virgin snow; above, a coat of black, flecked with great white snow-

flakes. Here was brilliancy combined with exquisite harmony of color. The bird was constantly in motion from very exuberance of spirit. It seemed as though there was some energy within that compelled it in its movements as the steam causes the lid of the tea-kettle to bubble. It was all excitement, all a-quiver. On the twig it was rocking and swaying and swinging and tilting from excessive vivacity. And this did not suffice. Every few moments it would launch into the air and describe circles about the tree, whirling, pirouetting, plunging, climbing, a mass of beautiful color in motion, and singing its very life away.

And such music! The gurgling of the chorus of blackbirds is sweet enough, or the weird tone of the mourning-dove that swells and fades like the distant swell of the sea. But here was a song whose notes were as clear as those of a silver bell, and certain and accurate as he leaped from one note to another and ran the scale; so musical as to be rivaled only by another grosbeak. And I stood with hat off, with memory bringing to mind other grosbeak friends who had sung for me in the library in the midst of

winter, abiding proof of the coming of the spring-melodies, friends much loved, now lost awhile; and my heart was swelling with gratitude to God. John was right. No man could

THE MUSIC OF THE PINES

learn that song, no man could duplicate its sweetness with trumpet or whistle or stringéd instrument. God filled that bird full of song to overflowing, and God's music from God's instrument was spilling out upon God's world to make God's children happy. There was no

man in sight, no thought of man in mind; God was everywhere, and His praise was being sung in rapturous melody by one of His creatures.

The pines are one of Nature's sublimest choruses. Wood-songs are as distinct as the voices of men and women. The aspen and balm of Gilead and rough-voiced oak are as different as flute and harp and horn. I listened to this mighty orchestra repeatedly during the month of August. The players were legion, filling the valley and flanking the adjoining hills: with jackets of green; with trunks clad with garments of purplish-gray, standing so tall and stalwart, knee-deep in feathery hemlock (or American yew); with fingers, if you will think of it thus, so many as to be uncountable, playing upon the reeds of the wind; or holding countless strings of green, if you will imagine it thus, toned with rosin like the bow of the violin. And the breeze was moving with delicate touch across them, as a nurse with delicate step moves across the floor, making music as that of chastened waves upon some far-away shore, sustained, strengthening, subduing, almost sobbing at times. As the sobbing sweetness fills the listener who tarries alone

in the presence of the orchestra, his soul seems to have lost its aloofness, its distinctness. It has reached out and enveloped the orchestra, and the music is sobbing, swelling through its corridors as the sea-wind sighs in the heart of the sea-shell. John was right. No man could learn that song. God filled that orchestra with song to overflowing, and God fills my soul to overflowing as I listen to His spirit moving the pine trees to music.

The song of the night is one of Nature's mixed programs. We are away from the hideous noises of the city, the clattering of horses' hoofs upon rough pavements, the shrieking of venders of various wares, the screeching and grinding of the switch-engine, the thundering of the freight-train, the ribald songs and profane jesting and loud bawling of men turned out of saloons, half-drunken, reeling along our streets at one o'clock in the morning, unrestrained disturbers of orderly people, and with all sense of propriety gone. Each season has its own night-song. There is the song of the night when the fragrance of the clover comes up from the meadow, and the dew lies thick

upon the greensward, and the stars great and small people the sky, and the moon is withering, and you are alone so far as human comrades are concerned, intently listening, and you hear the hum of the swift-rushing blood across the ear-drum, the drum-beats of the heart marking time for this wonderful onward-marching life, and the hum of myriad insects from grass and bush, and the subdued hush of the breeze that will not profane Nature's stillness, and the quiet music of the stars, and the voiceless music of the dark. It is almost as still as death, and yet vocable with many sounds that blend into music inconceivably sweet. And one is not sure but that he has passed earth's divide and stands on heaven's shore. And there is the music of the winter, when the snow muffles the noises of man and covers the scars he has made upon the face of mother earth, and the frost is wrapping the wire fences and the twigs of trees with fantastic figures, and congealing the breath. Then is heard the boisterous music of the wind as in stormy gusts it sweeps across the shuddering earth or trumpets among the branches of the

trees. And when the boisterous wind has finished, there is the delicate music of frosty crystals or vibrant snow. And the very lights and shadows cast upon the earth by the pale moon seem to breathe forth faintest music. God has filled even the shadows of the night, the dark places of earth, with unutterable music; and as I stand and listen and catch the symphony, my own soul responds to the melodies of God and whispers His praises.

Yes, John was right. There are songs which no man can learn; but man can listen, and with mind intent and heart in tune with the Infinite can hear and enjoy and give praise.

There are other songs which the untaught man can not sing; they lie outside of man's unaided powers, beyond the limitations fixed by his boorishness and ignorance and sin; but these are removable limits, and these are songs that may be learned, even the "Songs of Redemption."

Christ is the Teacher of these songs. I have spoken of man's greatness and remarkable achievements. He can not do anything without God's help. He can not cross the ocean

without calling upon God's forests and mines to furnish him with a ship, God's fields to furnish him with a sail, God's gardens to furnish him with food for the voyage. It is only by constant subjection to the laws and decrees of God that he can do anything, that he can live, that he has being. But he may achieve something of greatness without acknowledging God's help. The son who has been fed and clothed and housed and has inherited strength of body from his father, may use that very strength to strike his father in the face. And a man receiving everything that is good because of the kindness of God, may use these talents and opportunities without any recognition of God; yea, he may curse God to His face. But there are tasks he can not perform, there are heights to which he can not climb, there are songs he can not sing except as there is grateful recognition of and willing surrender to the Son of God.

Jesus is Teacher sent of God to man. Obedience to Christ wonderfully enlarges the prospects and possibilities of life. As the child needs the teacher who is wiser to help it to plan, and wisely accepts the plans as the teacher

urges the child to stop its carelessness and indolence and evil habits, and to improve the time, that it may live a useful, honored life; so is Christ to man the Teacher to direct in planning, to warn against the destroying forces of life, to counsel and urge the better things. Appreciation and love toward Christ which leads to willing discipleship, and a regenerated heart: a heart out of which the discord and discontent have gone because of His abiding presence, out of which the demons have fled from before Him as the demon-infested swine fled from before Him in the land of the Gadarenes, out of which sin has disappeared as the darkness disappears before the sun,—become the basis of a new man who can sing the songs of redemption.

Christ teaches us to sing the "Song of Good Cheer:" not only when the sun is shining, but when the rain is falling; not only when victory is assured, but also when defeat threatens; not only when all things unite to make life easy and joyous, but also when the very powers of darkness seem allied against us. He teaches us the "Song of Good Cheer" containing the note of

COURAGE for the fighting of battles against untried enemies, the making of journeys across unknown territories, the daring to venture upon any task lying in the path along which He leads us; containing the note of OPTIMISM which refuses to be hushed in the hour of seeming defeat, which refuses to believe that Satan is master of this world, which does believe that, however long the fight or bitter the struggle, God will win, the fogs will lift, the darkness will be dispelled, and righteousness will come to fill every heart as the sunshine fills the gardens about us; with its note of CONTENTMENT that makes one at peace in the modest home, living quietly apart from mad seekers after wealth and great houses and luxuries, and does not pine and is not jealous because of their appearance of success and happiness; that makes one at peace in obscurity, living contentedly apart from "the madding crowds" who are ever seeking after position, popularity, notoriety; that cultivates modesty, contrasted with boisterous, riotous brawlers.

"Toiling—rejoicing—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;

Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees its close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose."

The follower of Christ is experiencing the truth of the blessed promise of Paul, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Christ teaches us to sing the "Song of Service." The song of labor is always sweet if one be not too near; the doing of things, the building of houses, the writing of books, the solving of problems, the labor that makes man happier and freer and larger and brings him on his way up the hill toward God,—all of that is sweet if one is not too near. But as one approaches the toilers, whether at desk or shop or factory, too often he hears the notes of discord, quarreling and disputing and jangling, fighting about the way the task is to be done, and about the returns of the labor, instead of praising God that together, with each man in his place, we may do the work for the saving and uplifting of the world. Unselfish service is the beautiful song with no discordant note

to mar its melody. What music is gendered by the life of service!

In describing "A Doctor of the Old School," "Ian Maclaren" says, "He did his best for the need of every man, woman, and child in this wild-straggling district, year in, year out, in the snow and in the heat, in the dark and in the light, without rest and without holiday, for forty years." This was the favorite character for Governor Johnson of Minnesota, who has just fallen by the way in the midst of life's duties. Let me read from an editorial in one of our papers: "Like his favorite character, Governor Johnson has gone about among his people for forty years, doing his best for the need of every man, woman, and child, 'in the snow and in the heat, in the dark and in the light.' " So lived this remarkable man, singing the "Song of Service." Let me read again: "A few days ago in the city of Chicago, Mrs. Sarah C. Clark celebrated a very unusual anniversary. For thirty-two years she had been a regular worker in the Pacific Garden Mission, which her husband, Colonel George R. Clark, founded. Since his death, ten years ago, she

has had entire charge of the work and has conducted meetings there for five thousand consecutive nights. Any one who knows anything of the Pacific Garden Mission knows what a power for good it has been and is. Into that hopper has been poured the scourings of humanity, the murderer, the crook, the harlot, the starving, the dregs of the underworld; and out of the mill has come the regenerated, the square man, the honest one, the decent woman, fed and clothed. Five thousand consecutive nights laboring for the good of the world! Not five thousand nights of shifting pasteboards in a senseless effort to win a prize that can be bought for fifty cents; not five thousand nights of feasting and drinking to injure the natural organs of the body; not five thousand nights in the reckless pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp that leads to a slough of despond: but five thousand nights of devotion to a sacred duty; five thousand nights of laboring with the sin-sick and the weary; five thousand nights of demonstrating how great are the possibilities of human exertion and how glorious are the results that are bound to come. Five thousand nights of selfish-

ness or five thousand nights of sacrifice? The lamented Governor of Minnesota, the brave little woman of Pacific Garden Mission, give the answer and point the way." But these are not all. The slum-workers at home, the mission-workers abroad, the man at home in business, among friends or among strangers, whose heart is filled with the spirit and love of Jesus Christ, who is living the Christ-life, doing good to all men, doing good to them which despitefully use him, counting his life of great account only as it can be used to bring blessing and peace and joy to other lives, that man is singing the "Song of Service."

Jesus teaches the "Song of Heaven," sung by those whose robes of white are the purity of heart He has brought to those who serve Him; whose palm-branches are symbols of victory, sorrows having ceased, and pains having been conquered and cast aside; whose voices are the voices of praise and thanksgiving and gratitude to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. We shall sing there, some day, a part of that chorus whose music no ear hath heard in its fullness or mind conceived in

its richness. But now, as we journey on toward heaven, more and more of that music of the heavenly song is in our hearts.

There are songs that no man can learn but the redeemed of the Lord. But there is the Christ over against every man, the Teacher from God who seeks to come into every heart and teach every man to sing the "Song of Purity," the "Song of Good Cheer," the "Song of Service," the "Song of Eternity." He is so eager to teach every one, to teach you, that He died to bring it to pass; so eager that He dwells with us for evermore; so eager that He knocks at the door of your heart. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

IV

THE IMMANENT GOD

THE IMMANENT GOD

"LET the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."—ISAIAH 55:7-13.

"THOU, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands; they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."—HEBREWS 1:10-12.

"SHALL the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? As if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood."—ISAIAH 10:15.

IV

"THE Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not."—ISAIAH 49:28.

UPON these consecutive Sabbath-days we are seeking for evidences of God in the world, in history, in literature, in man's body, in man's mind; to-day we seek for Him in the natural, material world.

The word "evidence" is used deliberately. The erudite philosopher or psychologist may object to the word and declare that God does not evidence Himself, and it may be true that there is a sense in which the charge is correct. Perhaps, according to the philosophical standards, God can not be proven. But to me in my plain, simple thinking these are evidences, are proofs; and I think that the average man is little concerned with philosophical subtleties, and finds or will find upon investigation what I find: that here are EVIDENCES that satisfy him as to the existence of God—such a God as the

Christians believe in and worship; and through such investigation he may come to worship Him. To me God proves Himself, and I present to-day one of the evidences.

The text is a comprehensive sentence. Isaiah asserts that God is the Creator of the earth. It is not an orphan; did not, like Topsy, simply grow; did not spring into being of its own volition or accidentally happen to be. God is the Creator of everything contained in the universe; not simply primal conditions, not simply matter and force and space: every star and constellation is builded by Him, and every mountain and valley, and every shifting hill of sand, and every forest and plain, every flower and bird. God is the Maker of everything that is, even to the ends of the earth. And He fainteth not; He is not far away, is not taking a vacation or resting: He is busy at work here and now.

The text includes all of the findings of science. Science has to do with observations, the study of things as they are and have come to be, and how they conduct themselves. Science is the keen-eyed man seeing things; and all that has

been seen or will be, is here told as the work which the Creator is doing in His universe. The text includes all of philosophy in a nutshell. Philosophy takes the facts which the

A SHIFTING HILL OF SAND

scientist has gathered and draws conclusions from them, and here is the final conclusion that this is God's earth and He is in it, doing things. The thought is so simple that "wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." They may not know the details of botany as the botanist

does who has given his life to this study and has written volumes containing the information he has gathered, but in the last analysis they stand with the botanist, able only to say that God is the Builder of the flower. They may not have any technical knowledge of astronomy, may not be able to call the stars by name, or point out the constellations as they slowly and nightly move across the dome of heaven; they may be ignorant of the nebular hypothesis and the Copernican theory and the transmission of light, but fundamentally they stand where the most learned astronomer stands, with the confession upon their lips that God is the Builder of the universe.

Not all men see these simple, great truths; that is true. Some get so puzzled with material things, and enamored by them, that they do not see through and beyond to the mighty God, the Source of material things. Some get so fascinated and blinded by the processes of making things, studying how they are made so intently as not to look beyond to the Maker of them. It is easily possible for a man to get lost in and bewildered by details. A man

on the mountain-side may be scanning so intently the little hills and valleys in the midst of which he walks as to fail to see the great mountain which carries these upon its shoulders and which towers above them. So a man may walk in the midst of suns and stars, of land and sea, of beast and bird, and fail to see the mighty God who holds them in the hollow of His hand and who towers above them. A man may look eagerly into the face of Nature and fail to recognize in the multitudinous changes and diversities that the unchanging God is the great Essential. I am asking you to go with me in thought to-day along some of the highways and byways of Nature with the intent that we may come face to face with God.

Need I apologize for preaching a Nature-sermon? Is there danger of making it a theme too pronounced? Why, I might as well apologize for repeated readings of the Bible. These are teachers sent from God, and until we know Him as He is we will need to read and re-read these volumes. Until God has grown weary of writing Nature-sermons, let me not grow weary of preaching them. Though I behold

the wings of the morning as they fan the eastern sky with their pinions of orange and red, He is there. And when the sun gilds the western sky or paints the dappled clouds with purple and lilac, He is there. And where He is we shall make no mistake if we go and seek to learn what He busies Himself about.

There are certain men who say that God is not in Nature, they do not find Him there. (Perhaps they do not seek Him there.) Most conspicuous in this group is the churchman; more conspicuous than the scientist or even the atheist, perhaps because we expect better things of him; but perhaps, also, because his followers are more numerous, and also because he often is more positive in his convictions and more thunderous in his declarations. This particular man in the Church denies that God is in Nature because it is easier to deny than to explain existing conditions in the world if God has anything to do with it. There is so much of suffering and cruelty and death. The fox kills the rabbit; the pickerel pursues and mangles and swallows alive the smaller fish; the dragon-fly is more savage and bloodthirsty than mytho-

logical dragons, as it lies in wait or follows and seizes and kills some fly or other insect.

Indeed, is it not always life at the expense of other life? The beetle kills the plant that it may live; the frog swallows the beetle, the snake the frog; the bird preys upon the snake, and the bird, when asleep, is surprised and killed by the pine marten. Life builds up by destroying other life. And this is not all. The storm rages, and hundreds of thousands of birds lie dead in its wake. The cyclone sweeps across the country, and ruin and death are its results. The earthquake throws the ground into convulsions, buildings topple over, fires are enkindled, and human lives by hundreds are destroyed; the flood rages in the river-valley of the Yang-ste-Kiang or other river, and thousands are drowned. In India the monsoon does not come, the famine spreads, and the groans of the dying fill the air; or pestilence creeps through the country with stealthy movements, leaving its victims everywhere. And there are the maimed and halt and blind, the deformed. A dark, somber picture is portrayed. This is not the time to show that this can be explained in har-

mony with the plan of the beneficent God for the uplift and progress of the world, to show that the law of sacrifice is everywhere at work, compulsory or voluntary. But many, seeing the somberness of the picture, simply give the world over to the devil.

This attitude of the churchman is also partly explainable as the outcome of the Augustinian philosophy. There are places at the crest of the watershed where the water may very easily be turned in either direction, so as to flow to opposite points of the compass. But later on, when the stream has become a mighty river with great banks, it would be well-nigh impossible to change the direction of the current. So is the history of schools of thinkers. When a system of thought originated with some man, it would not have been difficult to have corrected, contradicted, denied, or changed the direction of the current of thought; but the system grows, its followers multiply, it becomes entrenched, other schools of thought are fashioned by it, it becomes "set," rigid, and inelastic. Many even look upon a system of thought as divine because it has long been accepted, and

one is counted a heretic who dares to question or oppose, though his right should be as unquestioned as that of the originator, and his information may be superior.

Long ago Augustine fathered the idea that God did His work with the world in six literal days, and then went off and left it, being, as Carlyle would say, a kind of absentee-God, sitting on the rim of the universe or winding up the world like an alarm-clock, and then going away and leaving it to run down or smash. Augustine was a mighty man for good, but his theories in a field where he was ignorant have done the Church much harm. Now, perhaps growing out of the above conditions, many have come to believe that God's only relation to Nature is to upset its workings or to interfere with them now and then. And a miracle is conceived as God contradicting Nature. God is in Nature only when He speaks to the storm, and the sea becomes quiet; speaks to the water, and it becomes wine; speaks to the fig tree, and the leaves wither; instead of recognizing that God is in the storm as well as the sleeping sea, in the water as well as the wine, in the fig tree when

the leaves do not wither as well as when they do. They think of God as fighting against Nature and seeking to conquer and control it just as we do, instead of being its Maker and Ruler.

With the ordinary procession of Nature, God has nothing to do. Only the unexplainable things are of His doing, such as the making of force, matter, life, species. The result is that the world under normal conditions, when something unusual is not occurring, has been separated from God and either abandoned or consigned to the devil. As some spiritualistic medium borrows a table and uses it only for table-tippings, rappings, and other grotesque phenomena, so God is conceived as borrowing the world or taking possession of it now and then for some table-tipping seance, but it is left to care for itself in its sober, serious moments. God is juggling and performing tricks with the world. He is seen in the burning bush, but not in the bushes everywhere growing and blossoming and bearing fruit; in the whale when it swallowed Jonah, but not when it sports with the waves of the sea and spouts geyser-like

streams of water and spray into the air; in the mountain when Moses received and wrote the Ten Commandments, but not when the storms play about its brow and the snows gather upon its sides; in the sea when Jesus spoke to the storm, but not when it tossed the frightened mariners; in the fig tree when it was cursed, but not when it was a blessing to humanity by bearing its harvest of fruit.

I have heard a minister say that when the transmutation of species could be explained he would give up his Christianity, and have heard others make similar statements. Do we understand the import of this foolhardy statement? Foolhardy because, if meant, it means that Christianity will need to be abandoned; foolhardy again, because it is putting a premium on ignorance. I will believe in God as long as I can not know much about Him and His way of doing things; but when the world knows how He is creating life or forms of life, I will give up my faith in Him. By this position the Church has lost much, when it ought to be learning all that it can about God and ought to be praising Him for every addition to truth

and for every discovery as to His workings in His world. To the man taking this position let me say again that he is throwing himself before the engine, foolishly. The human mind craves the truth because God has endowed it with that passion, and it will run to and fro through the whole earth, seeking to know all that it can about the world; and instead of objecting and denouncing, we will do the Church service if we appropriate and rejoice that we know more about the way in which God is doing things.

Then there is the scientist (some of them) who is studying, investigating, learning, gathering facts, drawing conclusions, without taking God into account; and sometimes he seems able to get along without God. And the position of this man has been dictated largely by the attitude of the Church. It has said that God is only in the abnormal, the unnatural, the unexplainable, the unlawful. It is the well-known division of natural and supernatural. What is understood as working according to natural laws is not divine; what is beyond this, not understood, not explainable according to natural

law, is divine, God's realm. And the scientist has accepted the Church's definition.

Now, at first it seemed a safe position. However erroneous it might be, the unknown realm was so great; there was so much room for God. As if five hundred years ago the Church had said that the civilized part of the world belonged to man, the rest to God. At that time it would have left God plenty of room. But Amerigo Vespucci came, Columbus came, Cortez and Magellan and Hudson and Franklin and Lewis and Clark, until the unknown world has been added to the known, practically every bit of territory explored, and by such a division God has been driven from His possessions. Now that very thing has happened in the thinking world by such a superficial defining of natural and supernatural. At first so little was known and explainable that God seemed to be secure; but now, by patient investigation, ignorance has changed to knowledge, the unexplored has been explored, the "unexplainable" is explained by the children in the grammar-school. Students have explored the realm of light and heat and gravitation and ether and electricity

and color and species and life, not learning all about them, but learning enough to bring them within the realm of law, of what we call natural law, until Comte, accepting the dictum of the Church and seeing the increasing knowledge of natural law, says that "science will finally conduct God to the frontier, and bow Him out with thanks for His personal services."

Others of this group of scientists have deliberately or otherwise confused cause and method, and here has come the harm. For example, evolution as a method of creation is noble, and adds dignity and glory to God the Creator. Evolution is the process of creation God has employed. But evolution assumed as casual is absurd. Life is seen producing life, and is assumed as casual instead of a method of perpetuating life. This man makes heat and light and moisture and soil causes for the growth of wheat, and in his extravagant, delirious moments declares that "food produces brains, and brains produce thought;" that Hamlet and the Messiah and the Sistine Madonna are caused by wheat and beef. Or the "laws of Nature" supplant God, and it is assumed that they ex-

plain everything or will account for everything, and thus the laws are made potential and self-operative. They are a kind of perpetual-motion machine, doing their work without requiring an Initiator or a Controller. Such reasoning is illogical. A law is but an expression of a will or personality. And the one who supplants God by natural law merely deifies those laws or reads into them the attributes of God.

But if the above statements are taken as statements of method, all difficulty and inconsistency and ground for quarreling vanish. God has endowed life with the power of propagating life, or God works through life to produce life; God employs heat and light and moisture and fertility of soil to react upon the kernel of wheat, and thus causes it to grow and multiply. God has fashioned us in such form that food may be built into brain, and He has associated the mind and body in intimate relationship, not yet well understood by us, and the condition of the body has its influence upon the mind and thought. With the scientist taking this viewpoint, as many do, we have a common meeting-place. The churchman, particularly interested

in God's dealing with humanity, still rejoices for all the knowledge that may be gained as to the way God has been building the world and is carrying it on. And the scientist seeking knowledge of God in the material world fellowships with the churchman in praise of God, and with him worships in spirit and in truth, appreciating what the churchman is doing to learn of God's activities in the spiritual realm and for applied Christianity.

The bombastic egotist who struts back and forth before the public eye and loudly asserts that *he* has not seen God, and HE has been looking for Him in the laboratory with scalpel and reagent and test-tube; that HE has been looking in the minute world with the microscope, in the skies with the telescope, deserves only to be ignored, left alone, that he may strut and exalt his ego to his heart's content. But the scientist and the churchman both honestly and meekly and reverently seeking after the truth are brothers exploring mysteries, facing the problems created by ONE GOD. And though the paths may lead along different levels and into different territory, they should bid each other God-

speed and rejoice in each other's achievements, remembering that whatever is done is helping to solve the common problem, to lessen the common ignorance.

To these men, these brothers, Isaiah through this text is suggesting that God is not past, but PRESENT; is not accidental and grotesque in His conduct, but ORDERLY; and that the laws governing the world are God-made and God-sustained and God-enforced. This is God's world, and He is in it, looking after it, and caring for it, never wearied nor asleep. And we will look for Him NOW.

In the fascinating story of "Robinson Crusoe," for boys (and men; I re-read it the other day), do you recall how Crusoe, walking by the sea on the farther side of the island, found footprints in the sand; how he looked far and wide for the man who had made the footprints, without avail; wherever he looked, out to sea, along the beach, or into the valley or forest, he did not see a man, but the footprints were evidence enough to Crusoe that there were men about and they would have to be reckoned with? We can not see God with these eyes or feel Him

with these hands as we can see the stars and hills or feel the pebble or seashell. He is not a God of flesh and blood; but we can find, can see His footprints on the earth. These footprints satisfy us that He is about and is to be reckoned with. And we will look at a few of these footprints now.

First, God is the great Origin, the primal Cause. At the end of a man's thinking, as he goes back and back, this stands not only as the opening sentence of the Bible, God's written word, but also as the opening sentence of the universe, God's material word, "In the beginning God." Let us look, first, from the center to the circumference. Comparing the universe to a great wheel, God is not sitting upon the rim of it, but God is sitting at the hub; nay, rather, God is the HUB. In the beginning there is only God, only HUB. But in the fullness of time and according to His will His power manifests itself in various ways: force, space, ether, electricity, matter, light, heat, life, consciousness. The wheel is building, and these words may be likened to the spokes in the wheel; not that all of them are co-ordinate or of equal

value, but they are mighty group-words in our thinking, and thus may be used for illustration. Under each of these and similar words we group other words, things, ideas as subordinate to them, and by so doing we are building the rim of the wheel. The fault with this figure is that it is mechanical, and the universe is not mechanical; it is an evolution, a growth, but the figure will illustrate God's relation to His world.

The human mind, however, does not work from the hub to the circumference; it really works by process of synthesis from the rim to the hub. It is in touch with details which come to it through the senses, and from these it learns of the fundamentals; it is tarrying first on the rim of the wheel. A man sees running water, stagnant water, water in rivers, water in lakes, fresh water and salt water, water under various conditions. He sees cloud and vapor, fog and dew, rain and snow, ice and sleet. The mind is synthesizing, it grasps the idea that water manifests itself in various ways, but WATER is the common term. A man learns of the Caucasian and Mongolian and Ethiopian, of the Semitic and anti-Semitic races, of men who are

tall and who are short, fat and lean, old and young, sluggish and agile. Here are multitudes of details, but one day he sees that MAN is the common term, and he has made notable advance when he has grasped the group-word. Again he sees man, horse, bird, fish, snake, mollusk, and many other living things, a multitude of details; but one day the man sees that LIFE is the common factor, the fundamental term in all of these details. So he studies lightning, magnetism, the aurora borealis, and discovers ELECTRICITY as the group-word. So he finds atom, ether, gravitation. He is building spokes in the wheel. The mind is on the backward track searching for beginnings, causes, fundamentals. It is asking now what is the common term, the fundamental principle or cause from which these spokes have sprung. It is standing now, facing the center of the wheel, the beginning of things, and it says, "God is the Beginning, the Center of the wheel, of the universe."

This is not removing all of the mystery and ignorance involved in the idea of God. He is forever beyond us and impossible to us. We are not coming and can not come to the center

of the hub; our continued investigations and added knowledge but extend the rim of the wheel farther out. But whatever ignorance is involved in this idea of God as the beginning, there is ignorance and DESPAIR BESIDES in every other view. Browning strikingly expresses the contrast thus:

> "All we have gained by our unbelief
> Is a life of doubt diversified by faith,
> For one of faith diversified by doubt:
> We called the chess-board white,—we call it black."

Knowing something of the writings of Spencer and Huxley and Haeckel and their class, I say that what is lacking in their positions and is present here is a workable, conceivable theory that does not leave a man lost in the woods, as Huxley would have it, but holds ever before him a definite aim and plan and hope. Whatever others may say, my mind demands a First Cause, where it may rest. Until then, whatever it learns, it is not satisfied but wanders on, crying night and day, asking, "What is beyond? What is beyond?" and only rests and is content when it is facing Him and resting there, "In the beginning, God."

Again, my mind recognizes and demands God as Creator. Man is a maker, but not a creator. He can take existing things and reshape them and fashion them anew; but in all of his wonderful works he only changes what already is; he does not call into existence. But a creator is demanded; not merely one who can fashion things, but one who can call things into existence, who can cause that to be which has not been. Man fashions material substances: God calls matter itself into existence. Man can measurably control life: God creates life. Man can measurably develop consciousness: God creates consciousness. If somebody asserts that consciousness is a manifestation of life, I do not deny, but only say that if it is in life, it had to be put there. Nothing can be gotten out of life that has not been put into life, out of matter that has not been put into matter, out of energy that has not been put into energy. Clear thinking holds us to this position. If this is not true we are lost. By what method these creations came to be I do not attempt to say; but some time, somewhere, somehow these things came to be; and the one who

caused them to be, by that act is creator; we call Him God.

The very orderliness and intricacy of creation make the deduction doubly convincing. We refuse to believe, can not believe, that these things could possibly come by chance. Napoleon silences the speculations of his officers concerning God by pointing to the stars he has been contemplating, so beautiful, so mighty, so orderly, so harmonious, and asking them who was maker of them. Lord Kelvin, the great physicist, walking with Liebig, the renowned scientist, asks whether he believes that flowers can be accounted for in terms of chemistry and physics, and receives a reply in the negative; they require a Creator who has made them by manipulating these forces. Beattie, the learned Scotchman, schools his child and declares his own belief in God as Creator by planting flowers in rows to spell the child's name, when growing. The child is positive upon finding the growing name that it could not have been accidental, by chance; somebody did it. And Beattie taught the child that by the same deductions an orderly world was not here by

chance, but by the planning and power of a mighty God. With most of us, at least, this truth is axiomatic. We find a watch and insist that there must be a Builder. We look at the mountains lifting their brawny shoulders above the clouds, the mighty canyon deep in whose throat the river gurgles, the sun unwearyingly running his race day after day, and refuse to believe that these things are accidental or possible without being created; they are God's foot-prints, God's finger-marks. Back of them we see a Creator.

Again, we find God as the Omnipotent. We look at the skyscraper man has built, towering twenty or thirty stories high, far above the surrounding buildings, and we wonder at man's audacity and ability until we stand by the giant redwood or the snow-capped mountain peak. We behold with admiration the irrigating-dam holding countless barrels of water in leash, and praise the engineering feat of man until we see the great expanse of water, lake or ocean, held in leash by hill and plain or by the continents themselves. We marvel at the genius of man as the great steamships come plowing across

the harbor to the dock until we look at the starry fleets of heaven, deploying and moving majestically, evenly, ever forward. We praise man for what he has been able to do with his limited powers; we stand dumb before God who has done the impossible things, who is the Omnipotent One.

We note, again, infinite skill. Man struggles to make a perpetual-motion machine: God endows the heart with strength for fifty or a hundred years. Man is stumbling in his endeavors to navigate the air: God makes every bird a dexterous and automatic flying-machine. Man builds a submarine boat: but it is an uncertain thing in contrast with the water-beetle. The pipe-organ loses its tone and harmony: Niagara thunders through the ages. The flute makes discord as well as sweet tones: the hermit thrush but adds melody to the evening air. Such ingenuity, such cunning, such mechanism are displayed that we say God has been about here at work. This is not the work of man: this is the work of God.

Again, we find PURPOSE, an attribute of personality, a personal God. We see the build-

ing of a cathedral: the excavating, the sinking of the foundation to the bed-rock, the walls of stone and marble, the arches and dome and spires gradually taking their places; and we can not be persuaded that there is not some underlying purpose and symmetrical plan. Each thing is done for the other parts and each grows out of the others, and all are builded into one for some sufficient reason. So we look at a tree: the roots and trunk and branches and twigs and leaves, and refuse to believe that this is an accidental aggregating of parts; each has its relation to the others, and all are brought together for some sufficient reason. We find a house completed, equipped with furniture and food and cooking-utensils, adorned with pictures and curtains and bric-a-brac, and we say, Somebody purposes to live here; this is not done by chance and never to be used. We look upon the great world with its treasures, resources, problems, opportunities, and we say it is a home builded of God for His children.

To say that there is no purpose is utterly confusing; to try to conceive of this natural world without plan or motive or object is mad-

dening; to say that it is God's world, built for us, His children, where we may serve Him, is ennobling and answers not all but many of our questions, and gives us a program for life that is worthy of our best and highest efforts.

EVERY BIRD CARES FOR ITS LITTLE ONES

But why go on? We can not designate or examine every footprint, for the earth is covered with them. We can not say, Lo! here is God, or there; for behold! He is everywhere, wherever hands are lifted in prayer or wounded

heart cries out for healing or penitent soul seeks for forgiveness and uplift; and also where every blade of grass is growing, where every leaf is quivering in gentle breeze, where every flower spills out its fragrance upon the air, where every bird sings its song and cares for its little ones, where every cloud drifts and every drop of rain falls, God is there. He is everywhere.

And everything is His; His mark, His genius and skill and power and purpose are stamped in burning letters upon the midnight suns, resound in thunderous tones where the mad cataract leaps, echo and re-echo in every song of bird. This is God's world. He is in it; everything is His. And He is caring for His own, and does not faint. And to-day my heart praises Him, and with Christ the Lover of the lilies I stand beneath the spreading tree or by the singing brook and worship Him, the mighty God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

V

THE MESSAGE OF THE CANADIAN WILDERNESS

THE MESSAGE OF THE CANADIAN WILDERNESS

"As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring."—Acts 17:23-28.

V

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness."—JOHN 1:23.

YOU recall that John the Baptist, seeking to turn attention from himself as he stands with his audience in the waste-places, the uninhabited section of country, describes himself simply as a voice calling upon humanity to give heed to God and heralding the coming of Jesus Christ, Son of God and God's Seeker after those who are lost in the wilderness. As we look at John and as we hear him calling there is danger of our forgetting that there is a greater Voice in the wilderness than the voice of John, even the voice of God, calling to man through the very rocks and wooded hills and flowing waters in the midst of which he stands, telling man of His majesty and omnipotence, and seeking to interest him in the fruitful quest after the perfect Revelation as it is found in Christ, His Son.

During these weeks while you have worshiped here in this temple and in your homes, I have worshiped in the Canadian wilderness, far from the sight of any cathedral or the sound of any Angelus or the presence of any host assembled to worship Him, but not away from God or the sound of His voice or the cathedrals He has made or the chimes that resound with His praises. I have been in the wilderness and have heard the voice of God there, and bring you the wilderness-message today.

It is a difficult task undertaken, to endeavor with words to draw a picture of the wilderness. Its almost unconquerableness is impressive. Man does conquer it: give him time and patience enough; but it is a hard job. From Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, a railroad has been projected to the Hudson Bay territory. It was surveyed or planned several years ago, but up to date only sixty-two miles of steel have been laid, laid under tremendous difficulties; for it seems almost a succession of trestles across streams and deep valleys, and of quarrying through granite hills. But such a railroad!

Trains run two or three times a week, depending upon "circumstances." We talk of sixty miles an hour; there they hope to make the trip of sixty-two miles during the light of a day, if

ROCKS AND WOODED HILLS AND FLOWING WATERS

everything goes well. But they have little expectation of reaching the end of the journey without delays or accidents.

On the edge of the wilderness where man has penetrated there are attempts at roads. In

a civilized country they would hardly be recognized as cow-paths, and only because those sagacious wilderness-horses have the tracking instinct of a hound and the nimbleness of a cat are they enabled to make their way through the forest and scramble across such log-bridges as would make a city man faint and fall into the stream below if he endeavored to cross on foot. There are attempts at mining; for the frontiersmen in that region firmly believe that it abounds in mineral wealth. Here and there we came across an excavation or a seam of rock marred and scratched by the tools of a prospector, but that was all. One day we came upon such a scar, and by it there lay the hammer and pick and chisels, rusted and abandoned. One could plainly read the mute story, starved out, driven back by the wilderness.

Upon the outskirts of the forest, endeavors have been made to clear the land. I looked upon territory where men had gone with axes and cut down a heavy "stand" of pine and removed the logs, yet the forest seemed to stand with undiminished thickness; and crowding between the standing trees, I wondered how the

logs could have been dragged among their trunks. I looked upon territory into which men had gone a second time with their axes and had cut down and removed the hemlock and spruce, and still the forest seemed to stand as thickly as before. There were three forests in one; having been denuded twice, it had now become a deciduous forest of birches and maples and beeches, but seemingly as impenetrable as before. The stumps are quickly covered with new growth, the scars quickly heal, and one can hardly believe that two "crops" of timber have been removed. In the edges of the wilderness there were attempts at clearings, but they were feeble attempts. One gained the impression that a man would hardly dare leave his plowed patch over night, for fear of finding, when morning had come, that a forest had sprung up while he slept. Certainly vegetation very quickly takes possession of the land where ax and fire and plow have gone. Shrubbery and vine and tree conspire to wrest it from civilization and transform it back again into wilderness.

Some white folks are trying to live in that

country. Along the rude railroad there are a few scattered hamlets, not even named; they are known as "Camp 45," "Camp 58," "Camp 62," indicating that they are so many miles in the wilderness, so many miles away from civilization. That life is so rude, so primitive, consisting of a room built of logs for a house, brick and mortar or even mud and sticks and stones for fireplace and chimney, scantiest fare upon the table which is made of rough boards, rudest clothing for wearing-apparel. I do not speak lightly of this people; it is the advance-guard of civilization, blazing the way to progress and comforts and luxuries; I speak only pityingly of that barren, dreary, desolate life seeking to conquer the wilderness.

There were lumber-jackies here and there in lumber-camps, and wood-scouts, and we occasionally came upon the camps of hunters and trappers. They were leading a hard life. When the winter's work is over and the logs have been driven down the river, which is swollen by the melting snows, to the sawmill, and the jackies are released from their labors and from the monotonous winter-life, little won-

der that they rush for the saloons and the gambling-joints and the society of evil women, that they fight and swear, that they drink and gamble, and spend in a few days often the entire earnings of winter. I do not justify any man in his sins; but I can see that the wilderness, without society or school or church or wholesome amusement, will make those men almost mad, so that, thrust suddenly into the human world with its glamour, they lose all restraint and rush impetuously into these great evils. They are deserving of more thought and help than they have received from us who enjoy the fruits of their labors.

And there are the Indians, fitting companions of the wilderness. During the summer they usually return to the reservation and grow fat and lazy at the expense of the Government. But when the autumn approaches, the instinct of the wild man blazes up, and they scatter through the trackless forest, hunting and trapping. Once we came upon a group of abandoned wigwams in the heart of the woods, but usually each family goes by itself, selecting some territory, building a lean-to, and spending

the winter there. Let me give you the history of one of these families as I read it, mostly in wilderness-language.

We were camping on a lake through which the Chippewa River flowed. One day, looking across the lake, I saw on the side of a cedar tree a cross shining brightly from the reflected sunlight. Jumping into a canoe, I paddled across to investigate. The tree stood on the edge of a bluff overlooking the lake. Two paddles were tied together and tied to the tree, perhaps accidentally; but I thought likely it was a signal. Evidently some human being had been around; so I landed, to examine more closely. Nearby I found the home; but such a home, a typical home of the wilderness! It was a most primitive lean-to; no windows or doors, no walls or floor, no sides or front, just some poles reaching from the ground to a cross-pole, roughly thatched with branches, facing the southeast, measurably protected by the woods behind and with the ashes of fires before. Various evidences of camp-life were scattered around. There were pieces of moose-hide, and willow-stretchers for beaver-skins. These ani-

mals can not be killed, according to the laws of Canada; but the Indian is not a creature of the laws: he is a part of the wilderness. Hanging to the branch of a tree was a nickel alarm-clock; so here was one sign of civilization.

From a fire-ranger I later learned that the squaw had been taken sick, and in this wild place, away from doctors and medicines and nurses and comforts, she had died, leaving the Indian and children. The clock had stopped, and because of their superstition had not been removed. The man had placed the body of his wife out of the reach of the wild beasts, had taken the children on a long journey through the deep snows and over the hills back to the reservation, and with the coming of spring had returned to bury his wife. I found the burial-place on the edge of the lake, across from where the camp had been. After the body had been placed in a shallow grave, the man had cut pickets with his tomahawk, and I marveled at their accuracy: it seemed like the work of a saw. With them he had built a fence of pickets about the grave, to prevent its being dug into or disturbed by the wild beasts.

Then he had cut down the forest trees about the grave and extending to the edge of the lake for perhaps a space ten or twelve rods square. The trees lay upon the ground as they had fallen.

I went one morning early and stood by the rude tomb and watched the sun rise over the great hills that were across the lake. The grave was on the west shore of the lake, so that the view was uninterrupted. And it was magnificent: the broad sweep of the placid waters; the forests beyond hushed to funereal stillness; and then the hills, climbing one above another, higher and higher, mighty steps leading up to the city of God; and the sun appearing above them seemed the open door into His presence. It was the work of a wild man, but it was noble work, proof enough that God's hands had fashioned him and had given him something of the noblest feelings and longings. Here had been pathetic sorrow and great love leading to these tender offices for her he loved, the best he could do. And here too was faith in God and the hereafter. He had buried her where she could look away to the rising sun and the bet-

ter day. May she rest in peace until that day when the trumpet shall sound and Christ shall call into His presence red man and white man alike, to measure them according to their opportunities!

If the wild man supplants the civilized man, the wild beast supplants the beasts of the farm. The streams are filled with trout full of primal vigor and strength as they leap from the swirling eddy or the foot of the foaming rapids or rush from the more sober depths to seize the fly that flits over the water; and when they strike it they dash away with unbelievable strength. Rarely we came upon the shed antlers of a caribou, more often of the moose, and sometimes came upon his track; one night a black bear prowled about our camp, snuffing and pawing at the empty tin-cans, and the deer were common. We frequently saw them grazing on the grass and water-plants, wading out into the water, or saw them swimming across an arm of the lake; and in many places the banks of the stream were so thickly dotted with their hoofprints as to remind me of the pastures at home, where the cattle tramped the bank of the

creek to drink. One day I paddled upon one grazing, stealing upon him so noiselessly and without motion, when he chanced to look up, as to come within a few rods of him. At last, when he saw me and I shouted, he was so frightened that he could only leap up and down several times before he got under headway. But when he did—what an outburst of speed! Here and there were the beaver-dams, thrown across some mountain-stream, and the quaint houses, and the creatures with seemingly human powers in the building of the dam and house with rooms, and in the storing of food, and the cutting of trees which were felled more accurately as to direction than any of us could do with an ax.

The Indian and the wild animals seem at home: they adapt themselves to this life, they are a part of it; but it is a baffling proposition even for the most experienced woodsmen. (Since my visit, in the country to the northeast of where I was, Leonidas Hubbard, going with a party to see the migration of the caribou, starved to death.) They are playing with death much of the time. While we were there, the

superintendent of a considerable number of lumber-camps sent three of his best men—foremen, who by skill and ability had won their positions—to explore the upper reaches of the Ghouli River and to plan for the winter's cut of pine, and locate camps and dams that might be necessary for the drive. I met the party in a strange manner. We had gone from our camp, several miles away, to a lumber-camp to spend Sunday with the two or three men, bosses, who remained there during the summer. Along in the afternoon I saw three men come walking down the track of the lumber-railroad. They looked like tramps, and I wondered and asked what those fellows would be doing in this country. The foreman looked and recognized them as men from another camp, and said, "Why, that 's Inglee and his men; but what are they here for?" and hastened toward them. From them we heard the story, while the men in the camp got food and clothing for them. They told of their expedition up the unexplored river: The three men were in a canoe, making their way up some rapids, when a sudden swirl caught the canoe, whipped it against a rock,

and smashed it like an egg-shell. The men got out in safety, and one of the fellows—a reckless, dare-devil of a fellow—plunged back, dove, and succeeded in getting an ax and a plug of tobacco. All of their provisions were gone; they were far away from camp or man; it was a critical situation. Their best chance was to strike across the hills and through the forest to this camp, situated on another river. They were without path or map to guide them, having only a general idea that somewhere in this direction the camp was situated; they were playing the game, and they made it. They came staggering in that Sunday afternoon, almost famished, bareheaded, and in rags. They had won in their gamble with life, and eating like wild beasts, they stopped now and then to laugh and twit one another about eating "pine-scones" and other unheard-of dishes. It was a part of their life, to be likened to a holiday-experience. To traverse those forests would be utterly impossible for a tenderfoot. Why, even with a guide to point the way and a stream to follow, I would shrink sometimes at the very thought of the bewildering country. A man

could stand within four rods and less, yes, stand within two rods of the rude railroad or a wood road and not see it at all; and that means that he would be much more apt to wander into the forest than to the path of safety. Such density of vegetation is inconceivable to one only familiar with our Illinois forests.

There are certain singular words that one associates with these solitudes. One is IMMENSITY. This building in which we worship could be dropped out of sight in almost any ravine, our entire city could be lost in even the smaller valleys between the hills; and areas the size of Chicago, burned over by some forest-fire, seemed only a fleck upon the landscape. One becomes such a tiny creature, so helpless, so insignificant here. One day we coasted on a railroad velocipede down the mountain-side for several miles. Here were the rails, and here and there a siding where logs had been loaded, and here was a vehicle, a man's work, but it seemed no more than the track of a worm across the sand. Everywhere were hills, stretching one above the other: some bald and white, some black with burnt stumps and logs, and others

covered with the virgin forest; and between them the valleys, each of them containing its stream with swift current and tumbling waters as they leaped over the obstructing ledge.

Another day, with our guide, we followed an Indian trail for several miles, from the lake where we camped to another that had no name. We went in a canoe down the river, shooting the rapids, and portaging where the waters leaped over the ledge or where the great trees fallen in one or two places had formed a tangled network across the river. We finally abandoned our canoe and struck boldly into the forest where the guide insisted there was an Indian trail, walking in the gloom and the shadow and the darkness because of the dense treetops that banded themselves together to keep out the sunlight. Once we found a cache, but did not examine the contents, considering sacred the unwritten laws of the wilderness, and near it a fragment of the skin of a black bear. Again, we found a horn of a caribou, sadly mutilated by mice and red squirrels, and came at length to the edge of another lake, across which the dusky Indians made their way in birch-bark

canoes. And standing on the shore and looking across the blue waters beyond the bouldered islands which lifted their leafy heads out of the water, we saw still further on, the farther shore, and on beyond the forest where scarcely foot had trod and where the deer and moose were grazing, and still farther on to other lakes and other rivers and other forests, and on and on where feet had not trodden, to the land where the trees were stunted, not having breathing-time enough during the brief summer, and where trees refused to grow, and the snows lay from winter to winter and would not go away that the earth might warm and the flowers might bloom. Before us were the silent places of the north, without a twig to crackle beneath a foot because there was no twig to break and no foot to break it; and around us were the silent places of the north, oppressively silent, for there was no dog to bark, no cock to crow, no lowing of cattle, no shrieking of engines. Ten thousand men might have been scattered about through this wilderness and all have disappeared, making no impression upon this northland. Ten thousand men might have

shouted with all their might, and received only the mockery of the reply of the hills. The mind refuses to calculate space and distance; it is bewildered and subdued by the very immensity of the northland.

The word POWER is stamped upon everything. We are accustomed to the turning of a few wheels because of the laboring of the engine. In a day's tramp one sees more power lost and dissipated and wasted where the waters rush down the declivities and tumble over rocky ledges and, foaming like a fretting horse, rush through narrow grooves worn into the heart of the granite-rock or built out of gigantic boulders, than there is in all the engines in a large city. One reads of the molding of great cannon and the strength of their blows to destroy the walls of fort or to pierce the sides of battleship that may cross the path of their screaming missles, and then one looks at the mighty granite-hills with bared shoulders, and wonders whether the shoulders would be even slightly dented if man should train his guns upon them for a thousand years. One watches the swinging of the arms of the derrick as it lifts a weight

of a score of tons into place above the ground, and then one thinks of the mighty arm of God which has lifted the weight of these forest-trees above the ground and holds them in place, such weight that he can not even conceive. And by the mighty power of God these hills have been built and forests built and lakes built and woven into the garment He wears. And then, by His mighty power He has thrown the garment of hill and forest and lake like a great mantle over the earth, His abiding-place.

And one spells MAJESTY there, letters made by hills and streams; majesty rather than beauty. It is too gigantic, too powerful, too overwhelming to be called beautiful; it is majestic. One looks into the face of the lake with its waters so delicately tinted with blue that the pathos in his heart is aroused as he sees in them another world. The great boulder rises from the edge of the lake—a substantial, ponderous thing—and in the lake appears its reflection; the trees of great bulk and strength form a protecting girdle about the lake, and another forest of equal size stands inverted in the waters. We do not notice the broad-winged eagle with

snowy head as it sails above us, but we see it sailing in the water beneath us. Here is another world. We can not hold it in our hands, we can not feel it; but in the pathetic blue of the water held in this hollow bowl God has made, mingled with proper proportions of sunlight God pours into it from heaven's beaker, we can see it, another world of perfect form. It is not material, but it is real, like the spirit-world we see around this earthy world reflected from the hearts held up to God into which He has poured His light and love.

But I saw the word MAJESTY most plainly written from the top of Shepherd's Mountain. It may not have been a mountain technically—I had no measuring-devices to ascertain—but it seemed like one to my puny mind; I named it because it towered above Shepherd's Creek, and one day I climbed to its summit. Without a compass I would not have dared to venture into the woods from the camp by the creek. Such climbing!—hills and ravines, boulders and gulleys, thickly standing trees and fallen trees, and worst of all, "shintangle," a creeping evergreen that well deserves its name. There was plenty

of sweating and hard breathing, but reward at last. Coming to the top, I crept out to the edge, that the view might be unimpeded. There was a sheer drop of several hundred feet below me, and then a very steep incline, so that the rock I pushed over the edge struck far below with a hollow thud, and then with great leaps and bounds and reverberations hastened to the level below. The effort of the ascent was well worth while. Far below me was the main valley with the stream appearing here and there, a succession of pools and rapids. The water was as clear as crystal, but with a tint of brown, as though it had caught the lingering reflections of the faces of tawny Indian maidens who had looked long and wistfully, hoping that it might carry the sound of the dip of the paddles of loitering lovers. Across the valley the hills were climbing, higher and higher — for miles and miles a succession of hills and valleys. Here and there were burnt areas, denoting the destruction of countless thousands of feet of lumber; but in the greater prospect they appeared only as slight blemishes upon the landscape. But the forests! Some of the hills were still

covered with pine: mighty, lordly trees towering above the other vegetation, appearing like leaders and inspirers of the mighty host; and an occasional one among them even taller and grander was the sentinel. And then there were the great masses of spruce and hemlock and balsam, and the birches and maples and beeches, and other deciduous trees. These distinctions were plain enough near at hand; but as one looked farther away, differences blended, until he looked out upon only a SEA of green across whose face great waves and troughs of waves seemed moving as the clouds swept across the sky.

Here was shadow, but out yonder the sun was shining, making the scene resplendent with its glory. A long time I lay and feasted my eyes upon the scene, the MAJESTY of God. At length the time to descend had come. Through a huge fissure in the rock I made an almost perpendicular descent, holding myself by the rough granite on either side, coming at length to broken fragments, some of which went tumbling down beneath my feet—some peril, perhaps, but the panorama was worth all that it cost, and more.

And here was apparent UNITY. There were no evidences of rival ownership here; not even a seed had been planted or valley sown with grass that God had not done. There were no evidences of discord or dispute. Every thing that was seemed to belong to the whole, as the various wheels and springs seem to belong to the clock and to each other. It was a unit, a whole, symmetrical and harmonious.

During those weeks the wilderness had a message for me: a message about God and His love, a message that was everywhere and all the time being delivered, but sometimes more plainly spoken than at other times because I was more in the mood for hearing.

"To him who in the love of Nature holds communion with her visible forms, She speaks a various language—from all around, earth and her waters, and the depths of air,—comes a still voice."

Moses and Isaiah and Jesus heard it from mountain and desert and growing tree; and I heard it: a definite, positive, inspiring, exhilarating message. One day on the bank of an unnamed lake we found the camp of a trapper.

The forest-fire had swept across this spot and had burned the camp and either destroyed the trapper or, more probably, had caused him to flee for his life. About the place were traps and weapons and other equipment, the partly burned hide of a moose upon a stretcher or frame, and near by at the edge of the lake, in the water, a canoe. We appropriated it for the day, and embarked upon a voyage of discovery. When noon came we landed upon a beautiful island for lunch and rest. This island, like the others in that part of the world, seemingly consisted of one huge boulder, nearly as large as a city-block, that had been dropped by the ice-floes of the glacial period, I suppose, here in the middle of the lake. Vegetation had gradually obtained a foothold, until now there were large trees and shrubbery and grass growing over most of the surface, with patches of the bare rock showing here and there.

After lunch the guide lay down to smoke his pipe and doze, while I slipped away to the other side of the island to be as far away as possible from the only man I am sure who was within many miles of this spot. On the edge of the

rock above the water I lay down upon a carpet of pine-leaves which had fallen through the years from the trees above me; lay down not to sleep, but to dream and drift, and drift and dream. And as I dreamed, I floated out upon the waters of the lake which lay before me for several miles and which sparkled like many jewels as the breeze sported with its dimpled face, and then I floated on above the forest that girdled me round with its foliage. I was in the center of a great bowl, and yonder on every side were the forests clothing the hills that stretched away toward the horizon and toward heaven. I floated back across the ages to the time when these hills had not been made, but when, by the Written Word, the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the earth, and I saw it all: the mighty Builder, with ice-floes for derricks, moving the great rocks across the face of the earth, dropping them here and there where He needed them and where He desired them. I saw the gigantic, fiery furnaces into which the crude materials were thrust, and out of which, heated and tempered in the furnaces of God, there had come this igneous rock, this granite

out of which these hills had been builded; I saw Him plowing the face of the earth with granite-hills and leaving the furrows into whose hollows these beautiful lakes had gathered their limpid waters; again I drifted back across the centuries to the present, but the Spirit had not departed, God was still brooding over the hills and forests as He brooded over my mind and led me to worship Him and sing His praise with lips that were dumb in His presence.

It did not matter that no church or human company was here: God was here, and these waters and hills and trees were clapping their hands in praise of Him, their Maker.

"There are flowerlets down in the valley low
And over the mountain-side,
That were never praised by a human voice
Nor by human eye descried;
But sweet as the breath of the royal rose
Is the perfume they exhale;
And where they bloom and why they bloom
The good Lord knoweth well."

And in that hour I scarcely knew where I tarried or whether, as Paul said, "I was in the body or out of the body;" but this I knew, that God was around me and underneath me, and

there, away from all mankind, I was in His very presence.

There was only one voice I heard: the voice of God. Nearly everywhere there are two voices, or at least the voice of man; and so often we listen to these grating, boastful, discordant sounds, and are deaf to the voice of God. We hear him boasting of his works, and forget that God is the Doer of things. We see man lifting the sheaf of wheat, and forget that God has lifted every sheaf of wheat into being; we forget the mountains of God when we are looking at the pyramids, and we admire the temples erected by man's labor and shut our eyes to these mighty temples whose Maker and Builder is God.

Pardon me if I even compare man with God in speaking of these things. If comparison is called for, then man shall be compared rather to ox and bird and tree and flower, God's creatures; and not to Him who is the Maker of us all. But here was no confusion of tongues. Look where I would, listen as intently as I might downward toward humanity, there was no human testimony to break the stillness, no

human mark or deed to obtrude its puny presence upon the handiwork of God. Here was proof, age-long, of God's work and interest and care; evidences enough of furnaces in which quartz-rocks were melted, ice-floes upon which they were transported; evidences of sculpturing of valley and cañon, of hill and mountain; evidences of selecting of proper material for the hills, strong enough to support the burdens they carried, pliable and fertile enough to melt beneath rain and sun and give root to the abundant vegetation. God was not far away, and here were paths that were leading to Him.

Everything was conspiring to teach the way to God. On the edge of the island, a foot or two above the water, I found the nest of a loon. Out in the lake the parent-bird, frightened away by my presence, was swimming and diving, now showing its black coat marked with squares of white, and now disappearing. There in the nest lay two baby-birds, the brown shells near by; the little birds, covered with black down, were just out of the shell and seemed so tiny and helpless. But when I drew near they tumbled down the bank into the water and

glided away, paddled away upon its bosom as gracefully as a swan. They were able to do it because they were fashioned of God to rest upon its bosom, to live in its waters. As I

A TINY BIRD ON GREAT WATERS

watched the splendid adaptation of tiny bird to great waters, I said, "How perfectly God has adapted the bird to its home!" And then I said, and say to you, that God has fashioned man, however weak and helpless he may seem, to find safety and refuge and shelter in Him.

Instinctively the baby-bird turned to the bosom of the lake for safety, and instinctively I turn to God, overcoming the hindrances, that I may rest upon His bosom.

The wilderness taught me that somehow we may find our way to the City of God. I had been going down the Ghouli River, stopping now and again to cast the flies across some foamy pool or beyond some sheltering rock to lure the speckled beauties from their hiding-place; then pushing on through the bushes and trees, clambering over tangled logs or log-jams. Evening was coming on; I was deep in the valley and hardly knew how far I had gone, and in the obscurity and bewilderment of the forest doubted whether this stream, so quickly disappearing, swallowed up, would ever find its way out and guide me through. In order to get my bearings I climbed a steep hill; coming to the top, I looked into the valley out of which I had clambered. Here and there was a glimpse of the stream, but soon disappearing; and I said it is lost, it has no destination, it is swallowed up. And then I looked down the valley, and here and there could catch the shin-

ing of the stream as the sunlight made its way through the rifts in the hills and fell upon it; and looked on beyond until far in the distance I saw the blue waters of Lake Superior and the river flowing into it. And I said, "It is not lost: it has found its way to its resting-place; for God made it not to be lost, but to arrive." And then I said, "I too will arrive." Sometimes the valley seems deep, the way seems bewildering, and life seems to be confusion and uncertainty. But standing upon the hilltop and looking down the valley into the sea, I thanked God for the rifts in the hills, for the light of His presence that shines into our hearts to illumine the way, and for the city yonder in the distance, the City of God, toward which and into which He seeks to lead every child of His, not willing that one shall be bewildered or lost.

Oh! I know that some would have stood by my side and cursed the day that brought them to these hardships, to the hills and logs and rocks and scanty fare.

"A cowslip by the river's brim
A yellow cowslip was to him,
And it was nothing more."

But this too I am sure of, that God desires to open the eyes of the blind and unstop the ears of the deaf, and would be with us in the midst of His groves and hills and streams and lakes, that there, as everywhere, He might teach us that He is our Maker and our God, and that we might come to praise Him and go with Him, even to the City.

VI

GOD THE ETERNAL FORCE

GOD THE ETERNAL FORCE

"SURELY there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone. God setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection. There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it. He putteth forth His hand upon the rock; He overturneth the mountains by the roots. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and His eye seeth every precious thing. He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing bringeth He forth to light. But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death saith, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. For He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure. When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder; then did He see it, and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man, He said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."—JOB 28.

VI

"God said."—Genesis 1:3.

GOD has grown amazingly through the centuries. From time to time some man of great intellect and great heart has discovered God in some new way, and then blind eyes have been opened and other men have recognized that God was greater and more comprehensive and with more faculties and powers than had been dreamed. Abraham discovered that God was not a bloodthirsty monster, feeding upon the blood of children; Moses discovered that God was law-abiding and orderly in the world and in dealing with men; Job discovered the presence of God in adversity as well as prosperity; Jesus did not discover, He knew from the beginning, but He disclosed to men the love and Fatherhood of God. And so not suddenly and completely, but gradually, our knowledge of God has been obtained and will be obtained through the cen-

turies to come. But from the beginning of humanity the one God that every man has recognized (or shall I say, the one quality in Him) is the God of Power, the God of Force; and the God which men in our time fear and subscribe to is Jehovah; however uncertain about qualities of tenderness and mercy and love, however doubtful about personality and will, every man of sanity recognizes Jehovah. It is this God, the Eternal Force, of whom I speak to-day.

God is present everywhere and all the time. Running back through the ages, following the paths which students have marked out in their investigations in different fields, we everywhere come across the mighty Jehovah in His workshop; we find Him busy everywhere, He stands at the beginning of things. The fields are producing their harvests of corn and wine and oil, and there would be no harvests if there were no fields where the sun graciously shines and the showers moisten the earth. But the fields refuse to accept responsibility. There would be no fields if continents had not been thrown up out of the water, and there would have been

no continent if there had been no earth, and there had been no earth if there had been no solar system, and there had been no sun and brood of planets if there had been no star-dust

WORKSHOP OF THE MIGHTY JEHOVAH

or space filled with surging atoms, and there had been no surging atoms if there had been no energy, and there had been no energy if there had been no God. We have reached the end and the beginning. We are standing by the side of God the Eternal Force and look-

ing toward the future, and we follow the marvels of creation: star-dust and sun and planet and land and sea and field with waving grain and stalwart corn, because God was there and God said that these things should be, and there came to be what had not been.

I walk out again into the presence of the present, the presence of things that are NOW being done. Here are trees on whose branches Some One, a Mighty Force, is building fruit; here are gardens in which are being built vegetables of many kinds by Some One not to be compared with or measured by any power of man, the Omnipotent One; here are rivers in whose depths fishes are being built by a Mighty Force; here are mountains on whose sides great forests are being built, and here are seas on whose bosoms waves so mighty as to play with man's greatest ships as though they were child's blocks are being fashioned. Everywhere is the evidence. This is not man's power or within the range of man's power: this is superhuman; this is Omnipotence; this is God saying things.

God is Force in action. He is busy everywhere and all of the time. Men have thought

they were busy, toiling in the fields or the mines or the forests or the warehouses where they have stored God's provisions, or the marts of trade where they huckster in God's produce; they have grown wan and pale and nervous and morbid because of tasks undertaken; they have come out of the mine grimy and blinded, and have cried for less work; they have gone from the desk or the counter or the office or the schoolroom and have protested against being overburdened. The insistent and righteous demand is for shorter hours, more play, more vacations. Why righteous? Because they are men, frail and weak and fragile. But God the Eternal Force is at work all the time. He never leaves the field, always at work, day and night, summer and winter, growing things or making ready for another harvest; never leaves the forest, always busy caring for the trees He has builded and is building; never leaves the mine, always busy holding the mountains in the hollow of His hands and fashioning their contents into gold and silver or coal and iron.

God is saying how things shall be, and they are as He says. Men speculate about the mak-

ing of continents: the cooling of the earth, the submergence of a great area to form an ocean-bed, the upheaval of a mountain-range to form the skeleton of a continent, and in fascinating language they tell INCIDENTALLY how it was done, and sometimes forget to tell PRIMARILY that it was done because God the Eternal Force said. Men speculate about the ten tribes of Israel: where they went, how they could have disappeared so completely, and whether they have left descendants in some of the more recent peoples of the earth, and why they wandered away from the homeland; and may forget to tell us that it all happened because God said. Men write of the Battle of Waterloo, and compare the merits of different leaders and different armies, and only Hugo remembers to say that the battle was lost and won by the decree of the Almighty.

Men and women are spending late hours in the dance-hall or in carousings and suffer the headache because God has made a system of laws to govern our bodies and has written a system of penalties for the infraction of those laws. An epidemic sweeps through a commu-

nity, the dread disease entering home and taking away members of the families in death: for the community has been careless about cleanliness; and heaps of unremoved garbage, the unkempt alleys, the polluted waters have been the forerunners of disease: for God has made a system of laws of health, and penalties for their violation. And only by rigorous infliction of these stern measures are men being urged to learn these hidden truths and to do the things they ought to do, and so are being urged along the path of progress.

To the one who perseveres, who is patient, industrious, temperate, diligent, there comes reward. A man is diligent at his books, toiling long and late, and denying himself the pleasures that would interfere with his tasks, and he gains knowledge and enriches the world with his learning; a man is frugal and industrious and persevering, and with the passing of the years the farm grows in fertility, the fences and buildings improve, his wealth is accumulating; a man applies himself to the task of cultivating his heart, endeavoring to uproot every thistle and thorn and to plant in their stead those

things which shall produce "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," and with the passing of the years the man grows in grace, his moral fiber improves, his character strengthens in ways of genuine manhood. And all of these things are true, because God has said that they shall be.

Man speaks, and we are left in doubt and uncertainty; for we must wait to see whether he speaks the truth. He may propose to deceive; he may be interested in a business transaction and foolishly imagine that he can enrich his life by dishonesty, by misrepresentation. God speaks, and we may well know that there is no uncertainty in the way of fulfillment: for is it not written that "not one jot or one tittle of the law shall pass away till all be fulfilled?" And again, is it not written that, "though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." Man may be mistaken. The jurymen freed the prisoner accused of murder because they believed him and he swore that he was in another place at the time of the murder, and had lying witnesses to corroborate his alibi.

But God is not mistaken, and He speaks the

word to the conscience of that man, and the hounds are unleashed and set upon the trail of that man; and though he may fly to the ends of the earth, he can not escape the haunting of that murdered face. God stamps upon his brain the words "murderer, assassin," and their echoes resound through the corridors of his mind by night while he sleeps and by day while he works. Wherever he goes, God has been there and is there before him, saying, "Thou shalt not kill," and saying, again, "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die." Man speaks intending to speak the truth, but may be in ignorance, or is powerless to execute the decree. He says, "I will do thus and so next year;" and the year comes, with its blooming of flowers and singing of birds, and there is a new mound in the cemetery, and the plans are unfulfilled. God speaks, and day and night, time and eternity, present and future leap to do His bidding. There is no uncertainty in the voice of God.

God's word is manifesting itself everywhere in motions. He speaks, and the tides heap themselves in great bulk and hurl their bulk in sportive glee against the mighty coast-rocks.

He speaks, and the winds are moving now so gently as to scarcely make a ripple upon the pond or a quiver to the aspen-leaf, and again in sturdy gusts that rock the forest-tree or sweep across the pond and drive the waves like frightened sheep before the dog. He speaks, and the clouds are in motion, now so light and moving so gently that one can scarcely see that they change their position at all, and now scudding before the wind like sailless ship before the storm at sea. He speaks, and the water is rippling among the pebbles or lazily loitering between grassy banks on its way to the sea, or leaping with merry laugh adown the ledge, or climbing into the sky, or beating the shrinking earth with falling raindrops. Everywhere is quiver, is stir, is motion, for everywhere the world is busy doing the things God says shall be.

God says that there shall be impressions in the mind through the senses. A man walks through the field and hears the baying of a hound on the trail of a rabbit, and the lowing of cattle wending their way to pasture-gate, the chirping of insects in the grass at his feet, the whir of wings as a prairie-hen springs from her

nest, the call of a quail from the top of a post, the echoing notes of the distant whip-poor-will, the scream of the hawk high in air. He has pictures enough in his mind for an art-gallery; and such an art-gallery it is, of the forest yonder, rich with the spring-growth of foliage; the lone tree with the wild grape clambering over it; the sturdy thorn-bush, the gravel-bank, and the windflowers decorating its crest; the level reach of grass with buttercups and dandelions; the garter-snake with its black and yellow stripes that crosses his path; the gopher that sits erect and whistles, and then in wild alarm pitches into its hole; the hairy woodpecker that hammers a noisy welcome and then scurries away in wild flight; the crow jumping for a grasshopper or sedately walking and peering for some bit of food! The fragrance of the sweet brier is wafted to him from the distance; the wild grape makes him wild with joy as he catches its sweetness; and the roses and the clover and the mint add their bewitching odors. And he has these sensations of sound and sight and odor, and carries them home with him because God is about, making the brain receive

and appreciate, and making the things to be seen and heard and smelled to the joy of man.

In the beginning God said that there should be, and there were new creatures on the earth, new trees and new fishes and new birds and animals. And God is still saying, creating things; and as a result of God's presence and power new species of insects and fishes and birds are coming into existence. God may take a long time for their making. A new form may drift very slowly from the type, and may require many generations to get far enough away and become distinct enough to rank as a new species. It does not matter whether God is pleased to take few or many days; the noteworthy thing is that God is still around, doing things, things that have never been done before.

And God is looking after the things He has done and made through the past ages, seeing that there is food to eat and water to drink and air to breathe. God is sustaining the body of man so that for years it goes along doing its work, bearing its burdens, enduring its trials. Sometimes there is a man who works at his task so hard and long it reminds us of the bat-

tleship of our navy just returned from its long trip around the hemisphere, coming into harbor with coal-bunkers empty, with machinery exhausted and wrenched. But as the bunkers will be filled and the machinery readjusted and put into fit condition, so the man recuperates from his labors, renews his strength, takes on new life, and we speak admiringly of the vitality of the man. Do we remember that man's vitality is but another word for expressing what God has done for man, what energy and endurance and resistance He has packed into the machinery of that body?

Everything that is made God has made. Perhaps no one thing should make us admire Him and fill us more with wonder than another thing; but as we look over the ages that have passed into history, written or unwritten, there are certain great creations that stand forth as of surpassing importance.

Now, we know that the tree with its fruitage of acorns or young birds was not built by a few definite certain acts, such as the making of root, of trunk, of branch, of leaf and fruit and fastening them together. We understand

that there has been a gradual growth from the tiniest beginning until now. Yet as we look at the tree these words stand out in prominence as the chief parts of the tree. So we understand that God has not made our world by a few definite acts, each separate and independent of the other, but that there has been a gradual building, a gradual unfolding, like the unfolding of a flower or tree. But it is also true that certain words in the account of the creation of the world stand out with startling distinctness. And we seem to realize more clearly how the doing of these things would call for the unrivaled power of God.

God spake, and matter came into existence. I pass by any theories concerning the relations or conditions of matter, any philosophical assertions or theories. I am satisfied to think of it now as the mind normally and simply does, the material out of which things are made, "world-stuff," "ground-substance," "star-dust." It is the raw substance, the "earth without form and void" of Genesis; not after it has been made into burning sun and heartless moon and whirling planet, into sea and land, mountain and val-

ley, boisterous crag or delicate snowflake or gleaming crystal of quartz. Indeed, any form that the crude material assumes, absolutely, inflexibly requires the word of God; but the mind

THE TREE WITH ITS FRUITAGE OF YOUNG BIRDS

rests more easily upon these root-terms. As a man says, if he has the pile of lumber he can make the chair or desk or table or stand or house, but he can not make the tree from which to obtain lumber. It is a fallacy of the mind,

but many have said that if only they have matter and the laws of nature to start with, they can account for the making of sea and land, forgetting that every law of nature is the written word of God and that every sun that is fashioned or every snowflake is God in action.

So to this man I say that we will stand in the beginning by the side of God, when there is nothing else: no sun or world, no matter or space, no time, only God, the Eternal God, Eternity. And looking from that distant point toward the day in which we live, we see the coming into being of the "star-dust" in whatever form it may have been, coming into existence because God spoke.

We look again, no matter how many ages may have passed in the shaping of matter by God into various forms; we look again, and there is life, for God has done another mighty thing in the forward journey of the world. We do not speak of any particular form of life, whether the crudest that lives in slimy waters or the more complex of brilliant bird and beautiful flower or of man himself; but life that will work itself out into myriads of forms if

God will but speak the word, the "ground-substance" out of which all of these forms will come. Life has come into being because God has spoken.

We look on still farther, and now there is CONSCIOUSNESS: whether the lowest knowledge of rude life which knows only what is food and what is warmth, or the knowledge of the bird which knows when the night has passed and the light is breaking through the eastern skies and it warbles its matin in field or orchard, or the fox which knows the track of the rabbit, coming across it in the snow, and sets out in pursuit of it, or the broader knowledge of man ending in libraries and inventions and discoveries; here is *Consciousness,* the underlying factor in all of this, and we are beholding another great step in advance that has come by the word of God.

Again we look, and CONSCIENCE has come into being: whether the crude conscience of the Indian who comes across the cache of his rival who has left there the pemmican or venison or parched corn against the day of his return from distant journeyings, and the conscience of the

red man speaks to him, and he says, "I will not take the food of my rival, for his very life depends upon it, and it would be unfair; I ought not to take away the morsel of bread that will prevent his starving to death;" or whether it be the developed conscience of the Christian, who not only says, "I ought not to take what belongs to my neighbor," but who also says, "I ought to feed my neighbor who is hungry, and clothe him who is naked; and I ought to do good to him who hates me,"—does not matter. Another factor has entered the world, and another long step has been taken in the upward climb of man, for out of conscience has sprung justice and mercy, unselfishness and brotherhood, as well as morality and the religions of humanity. And CONSCIENCE has come because God has spoken the word.

Another word remains to be spoken. From that beginning when God only was, we have come a long journey, but we have not come to the end of the journey or reached the brow of the hill. Looking around upon this world with all that we have found in it springing from matter and life and consciousness and conscience,

we are still in perplexity and despair, for here is neither appreciable plan nor purpose nor justification, and we must content ourselves with a "Riddle of the Universe." But God did not leave us with an unsolved riddle on our hands. He spoke again, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld the glory of God. He spoke, and the heavens opened and the Son of God came to earth to give an answer to the riddle, a meaning to all that God had done hitherto.

Leave Christ out of the equation, and we look upon what may be a building, but a building standing unfinished, without a purpose; leave Christ out of the equation, and we look upon the body of a man with limbs and trunk, but without head and only a question-mark in place of a head, or the face of some horrid monster. Some men have tried to remove Christ from the story of creation, and as a result they have taken us into the woods and lost us and themselves there. What infidel has given us an answer to our questions, has given a worthy explanation to creation as we see it? But God did not leave Christ out of the equation. He

who had builded a temple with its material substructure, its foundation of life, its walls of knowledge, its arches of conscience did not leave it unroofed or unfinished, but gave Christ to the world, the Completion of His plans, the Answer to our questions, the Explanation of creation.

God has been speaking and doing things from the beginning that we might have a home—a home with its burdens, for we need them to make our muscles strong and to brace our spirits: but a home of cheer and victory, because we can bear the burdens and endure the heat of the day; and a home of love, because Christ is with us as our Guest, to cheer and lighten and make strong for the battle and make tender toward the unfortunate.

From the beginning God was thinking of man, saying, "Let us make man in our image." When He was at work upon suns and worlds, upon prairies and ocean-beds, He was thinking of the time when He would have children in the earth to sing His praises; when He was covering the earth with growing things and creeping and flying things He was looking

ahead to the time when these things would be a delight to His children.

And the fullness of time is here, and His Son has come to tell us of the Father's love and care, and His hope that we will appreciate His love for us and enjoy the world He has made and love His other children and make our lives free from defiling things and sin of every kind. And in our extremity He has not forgotten or forsaken us. He who spoke worlds into existence and made life on the earth is ready and waiting to speak new life into our souls. Even now the Christ who came to seek and save the lost, who came with all power given to Him, is ready to come and make us strong, to give us so much life that we can throw off the sins that seek to infest our hearts and the temptations that everywhere beset us; and while it is well for us to know much about the works of God in the world, may we not forget that this is the great work of God, that we might know Him whom He hath sent.

VII

PATHFINDERS

PATHFINDERS

"And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more."—Genesis 8: 6-12.

"The cormorant and the bittern shall possess the land; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. Seek ye out the Book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and His spirit, it hath gathered them."—Isaiah 34: 11, 14-16.

VII

"THERE is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen."—JOB 28:7.

THERE is a path which no fowl knoweth and which the vulture's eye hath not seen, and there are eyes given to men —some men—which see the path known to the vulture, and which also see the path which leadeth to the presence and heart of God. The man who speaks the poetry of this text and who feels the poetry of the divine life in his heart is such a man.

Is it true that we must be born with the faculty of seeing the wonders of Nature? Many insist that poets come to their greatness as a matter of birthright, and not of drudgery; insist that one with the rare ability to command, to organize, to be an executive, must be born with that gift. Is it true that one who follows the bird in "its boundless flight," that one who looks with awe upon the mysteries of the uni-

verse, does so from the beginning? Or is it true that here is a faculty universal, belonging to every man, but lying dormant, uncultivated, unknown perhaps, requiring only to be discovered and uncovered and exercised to be given a chance?

All folks have eyes; but with many of them the eyes are a sham, a mere pretense, as deceiving as the marble veneer over the rough bricks. In Jesus' time it seemed as though blind men sat by every wayside. In our time blind men are thronging our streets, are crossing our thresholds, are staring vacantly into the face of the sky, into the face of the forest, into the face of the orchard. Having eyes, they do not see; nay, they do not have eyes. Something is lacking. The flesh is there, the cornea and iris and pupil, the crystalline lens, the aqueous humor and vitreous humor, the retina and optic nerve, but the spirit is lacking. And without the spirit of seeing the flesh of seeing is weak.

These blind men gazing upon the dandelions adorning the field in early spring, displaying beauty enough to make a seer weep for joy as they catch the golden sunshine and reflect it

back from their own faces, each blossom a nugget of glistening gold set in a field of emerald-green, and each blossom of the flower-cluster a work of technique, a work of art; these men

THE VULTURE'S EYE
Young Marsh Hawks

say, "Humph, a lot of weeds." Gazing upon the hulls of God's fleet of battleships as they come into vision on the distant edge of the horizon and plow their way so majestically from horizon to zenith, maneuvering for position as

they sail in the great blue ocean above us, the blind man says, "Humph, going to rain; ugly-looking black clouds; let 's get in the house and close the door and draw the curtains." But the curtains are already drawn. Gazing on the place where waters lurk in quiet pasture-pools and give birth to reed and rush and sedge, which make music all the day, instruments of many strings breathing music when blown upon by the gentle breeze, where birds sing to the morning-sun and the frogs at twilight pipe to the rising moon, and the muskrat thrusts his nose across the quiet pond and breaks its surface into many circles; he says, "Humph, nothing but a swamp and mud and weeds and frogs; let 's go where we can get something to eat or where we can see something." Such folks are to be pitied who shut themselves away from and who are blind to the beauty and grace and fragrance and music with which God has satiated His world. But though they are born blind, there is hope that, as Jesus long ago touched the eyes and they were opened to see, so now these eyes may be touched and made to see by waiting upon the works of Christ, by waiting upon the paths

of God, by keeping company with such men as Job.

Here is a man whose book would be worthy of its place in the Bible not only because He kept his confidence with God, but because he had so much to say about God's world. He talked of the stars and the groupings of the stars, Arcturus and Orion and the Pleiades; he talked of the rain and snow, of the hail and frost, of the balancings of the clouds, of hawk and eagle and bittern and owl; of rabbits and wild goats, of lions and lion's whelps, of behemoth and leviathan. And it will be worth our while to stand by the side of this man and look out upon the paths that are seen by eyes of birds and the paths that are seen by the soul of man. It may be that the mystery and unexplainableness of the wisdom displayed in this world by the creatures of this world may lead us to look with eagerness for the highway which God "hath cast up for His children to walk in," to find it, and to walk therein.

Birds are remarkable pathfinders. Peter was cautioned against calling anything common or unclean that God had made, but we constantly

repeat Peter's blunder. We have called the vulture vulgar and unclean, glutton and scavenger, feeder upon filth and carrion, and our empty words have framed our prejudices and blinded us to the wonderful instinct of this bird. But Job had seen what we might see in our own land. He had been among the hills where the sheep were pastured. Some lion had crept upon the flock without being detected by the shepherd, and had struck down the helpless sheep, had satisfied its hunger, and had left the remnants of the carcasses to decay, a disagreeable odor to nostril, a menace to health.

And while Job had stood on the hilltop looking upon the wreckage lying yonder in the valley, he had seen a black speck appear over the top of the distant mountain, miles away, and grow larger as it came nearer. Then from another quarter another black speck appeared; across the plain, behind him, others appeared. Here and there, perhaps from every point of the compass, these objects came in sight, so many miles away that they seemed like flakes of soot hanging in the air. But as he watched they grew larger and came nearer, until he could see the

steady beating of wings like the marching of the feet of soldiers, until he could see the head steadily dividing the air; and then one by one these birds dropped on the ground by the side of the mangled corpses, made their meal from the fragments, and did man a service, these scavengers of God appointed to keep the earth sweet and clean.

But this man was thinking not of that service, but of the mysteries involved in the coming of the birds. Without chart or compass each had found its way to the desired spot. Each eye had seen the path, each bird had kept the path. We wonder at the wizardry of the wireless telegraphy, the flashing of unseen messages along paths which only God has made. But here is more wonderful wizardry. What was the message that went flying through the air, across valley and plain, over hill and mountain, telling of the creatures slain, of the banquet provided? What was the message which gave directions, routes, so that these birds were not lost in the intervening forests, were not diverted by the hills? In our ignorance which we are slow to acknowledge we suggest that perhaps

here are eyes wonderfully adapted for far-seeing, or we talk of the powers of smell accentuated so that these birds can smell death twenty miles away. If these theories be true (and they are only theories: we do not KNOW how these things are) we ought to be dumb in the presence of Him who can put such marvelous ability into such creatures. In our endeavors to cloak our ignorance, to deny our ignorance, let us not foolishly lose the wonder of it which Job felt that day; the vulture's eye sees a path through the blue sky, stretching from his aerie on the hillside to the distant place where the food is provided.

The birds are marvelous pathfinders. At present they have practically left us, an occasional chickadee or woodpecker or crow or blue jay or shore-lark lingering to tell us that they will come back; but they have gone. They are visiting in Southern States or Mexico or South America. But in a few weeks they will commence drifting back from the South, heralded by the honk of the wild goose and accompanied by countless twitterings from countless throats. Now, we are so accustomed

to this, it is so common, that our eyes and minds are closed to the amazing wonder of it.

Think a minute. In Central America is a tiny bird, little larger than your thumb, one of the dainty warblers. Last year it was hatched in some Canadian forest. Last autumn it went South along the eastern mountain-ranges. One spring morning the migratory-instinct becomes dominant. Perhaps it has been restless for days; but this morning it sees a path leading up the Mississippi Valley basin to the Canadian forest. Though it has never been over the road, it starts on its journey. Here are hundreds of bewildering miles, great forests and great plains. The bird is not a student of geography, can not read mile-posts, carries no atlas, has no compass, is not familiar with the territory. Nay, apparently it does not even see the territory, for it travels mainly by night. If you will stand out-of-doors some May evening and look at the moon, you may see it for a brief moment as it darts across the face of the moon. Day after day as the migratory spirit moves it, it drifts northward, feeding as it leisurely goes, or hurrying in flight as though fear-

ing it might be late. Not lost in the forests, always knowing where the North lies; not bewildered by the network of rivers, on and on it drifts, and one day it "arrives."

Or look, again, at the golden plover. It nests in the far North, almost under the shadow of the north pole. It winters in Patagonia, nearly a half-world away. When it gets ready to go it springs into the air, sweeps out over the ocean, and far out of sight of land it makes that flight the length of the Atlantic, and alights only when it has reached the end of its journey. Can we explain these great mysteries? I am familiar with the theories about the young birds being guided by the old birds, about the need of headlands for guidance, about the food-question, about the far-away influence of the glacial period. If any of these theories are proved, the wonder would not be lessened how that God could put such wonderful powers, either quickly or by slow development, it does not matter, into these tiny creatures. But these theories are not proved; they are but poorly-woven cloaks for our ignorance. We do not know how these things are, but we know that

they are; and it will be well for us with open eyes and open hearts to look upon this wonderful thing, that God can build paths for these birds and can give these birds the power to find and keep the path.

Man has this pathfinding instinct. In Cooper's novels of the frontier life the "pathfinder" is the man who is able to see the path that does not exist, so far as the ordinary man is concerned. He moves swiftly through brushy thickets, up hills, across streams. You see nothing: he declares he sees a path the moose has made. Outside of the tent you see the grass standing undisturbed. This man sees the path of the red deer, the black bear, the gray squirrel, the white-footed mouse, the lumbering porcupine. You look at the swift waters of some Northern stream, with protruding boulders and hidden reefs, with eddies and whirlpools, and say there is no chance for a canoe to go through without being crushed by the mad river. He looks and sees through the maze of rocks and eddies and foaming waters a path, and with paddle in hand he follows that path like a rocket, follows the path as it turns quickly,

swerves swiftly through eddies, around rocks to the quiet waters below. He sees these paths because his pathfinding instincts are not blunted; they have been exercised and developed until he has become a normal animal-man. The bulk of us without this power to see the paths about us, are not normal. We are abnormal; these faculties have degenerated through disuse. Civilization may do many good things for us. It weakens and destroys many of our keenest faculties. The red man sees the points of the compass on the trunks of the trees; moss and flower as well as star and sun point him unerringly to the path he must take to the desired hunting-ground. The path is there for the man who has eyes to see.

In the natural, material world God has laid the boundaries and marked the paths, and has builded faculties in His creatures enabling them to follow the paths. God's hands may be invisible, but God's handiwork is everywhere manifest. The world is filled with the works of God, the wonders of God, the miracles of God. He gives power to the eye to see, and He decrees, "Thus far

shalt thou see, and no farther." He gives strength to the legs of a horse, and He limits the power, saying, "Thus fast shalt thou run, and no faster." He gives genius and skill to man to invent the machine that will climb the steeps of heaven, and He limits the heights to which man can climb. Everywhere are the paths, material paths, God hath made; and everywhere is life with ability to follow the paths. Some folks are dismayed at the thought of miracles, impossible things. Why, every bird that sees and keeps the path across the continent is a miracle, an unexplainable, impossible thing. Instinct is but a name for wisdom and cunning which God through the ages has packed into these creatures. God is the Maker of the path, and God is the Giver of the pathfinding instinct. So all life, bird or horse or man, has its limits, its boundaries, its ways decreed.

This path for all life is sensuous, depending upon eye and ear to find, upon muscle and fiber to give strength to follow, upon some passion to urge to follow. This path is material, beginning with the mystery of birth, when in some way which only God understands and can do,

life and dust strike hands and set out along the path; ending with death when the journey is finished and life flits away, God only knows where or how, and the dust falls back upon the bosom of mother Earth. This path of life reveals strength and energy, agility and cunning, fear and savagery, and many another passion; but nowhere along this path will you find the word "behavior." Squirrels, finding the storehouse where some other squirrel has placed the nuts for winter use, steal them, but do not call it stealing; the spider mimics a withered leaf or gay flower, that it may seize the unsuspecting insect, but does not call it deception. The stag will steal his neighbor's wife without thought of immorality, the hawk will kill the dove, and there is no murder in its heart. There are no Ten Commandments along the sensuous path.

And we are sensuous creatures, creatures of dust, creatures of time, of animal energy and animal passion. We do things without taking "behavior" into account. The cave-dwellers of England drive out the wild beasts from the cave with the same spirit displayed as when the larger

bear drives out the smaller from its own cave; and the Indians overrun the mound-builders' territories, the Huns invade Europe, or our fathers, the Saxons, invade the land of the Celts with the same spirit displayed in the migration of the moose or the marmots. Much of our activity is of the flesh, much of our journeying is along the path of the flesh, and in this we are following the path which God made when He made us as other creatures out of the dust. We know these paths as the birds know them, for they are the decrees of the Almighty. Job understood these things: that birds have their lives decreed by the Almighty, and that man has his earthy life, animal life, along the same lines—paths which he follows because of the way in which God has made him of the dust.

But he also knew that there were other paths, higher paths, unknown to the vulture, the fowl of the air; paths which man knows or might know, along which he might be guided by the will of God. What he endeavored to say is what Bryant endeavored to say:

"Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

"Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chaféd ocean-side?

"There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

"Thou art gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

"He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright."

Job is looking beyond the vulture's flight from mountain to valley, away to the soul's flight from the celestial mountain "to the island-valley of Avilion, where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow;" looking beyond the flight across the continent to the flight across the heavens to the realm of perfect day; looking beyond the flight of bird fleeing from storm and cold to the flight of man fleeing from storm and pain and sorrow and crying, away from the flight of bird that lasts but a few days to the flight of the soul out toward the eternities, away

from the paths along which flesh follows to the paths along which the spirit of man journeys or may journey.

We are looking now not at the paths along

WHITHER DOST THOU PURSUE THY SOLITARY WAY?

which God's creatures walk, but at the path along which God walks. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth; God walks in a spiritual path, and they that walk with Him must walk in the

spiritual way. There is a path that is not builded of rock and clay, of atom and ether, or measured by time and terminating in death. There is a spiritual path along which God walks, builded of righteousness and holiness, of justice and mercy, of tenderness and pity, of compassion and love. This highway begins in eternity and ends in eternity. There are no clocks along the way, with doleful ticking to alarm us with the thought that life is fleeing. Along this way it is always morning, and we are always facing the noon of the day; there are no almanacs to tell us that summer is past and the chilling blasts of winter will soon be upon us: it is always spring-time, and we are always facing, running toward the days of June; along the way there is no city of the dead: but before us the city of the living; no rolling of the mournful waters of death: but the flowing of the waters of life. God's path has no limit. Here there are limits everywhere: the wall of the house, the setting of the sun, the dropping of the sky into horizon, the close of the book; the limit of the spirit-world is forever. Here we drop the hand of our loved one when it grows

tired and death comes; there, there is no death. Here we grow tired of earth's business; there they do not grow tired of the King's business. It is the realm where God dwells, the path along which God runs and does not grow weary.

And what came into the mind of Job that day was, that there is a path which leadeth to God's Kingdom and to God Himself, unknown to the vulture's eye, that may be seen by the eye of man, that may be walked in by the feet of man. We are big enough to walk in two paths. Man is bigger than the clay he molds, the mountain he tunnels, the sea he crosses. Man holds these things in his mind, his heart, and is bigger than the things he holds, and must be. Napoleon with mind big enough to conquer the Alps, to plan for the making of the Alps but a footstool for the feet of his marching soldiers, is bigger than the Alps; Columbus holding the mighty storm-tossed Atlantic from Spain to the West Indies in his mind, is bigger than the ocean he humbles. Man given dominion over the earth, and asserting that dominion, is bigger than the earth he subdues, with its atom and ether, its energy and force, its life

and death, including his own animal existence. Man looking away to the stars, climbing to the stars, reaching out toward God, is big enough to walk in TWO paths. He walks the path of the dust, for God made him of the dust; but he also walks the path of the spirit, or may walk it, for God breathed into him the breath of life and made him a living soul.

We are more than vultures. I resent the barren, dying claims of the materialist that man is only a vulture-kind, with a life of the flesh and no other life, with paths of earth before him and no other paths. The birds in their earthy lives display cunning and skill and ability to do that tax our credulity, that baffle our powers of understanding; they bear proof enough of the intelligence and wisdom and ability of God. But they are one-talented, and we make mistake by humanizing them and bringing them up to us or dehumanizing us down to them. They are one-talented, we are ten-talented. There is an intellectual path along which the bird does not pass; it does not know and can not know, or be a student of Greek or Euclid, or understand the intricacies of the spec-

trum analysis. When Job marveled at and studied about the wonderful instinct of the bird, his mind was flying into heights inaccessible to birds. And when Job was thinking of the great God who was Creator of bird and man, he was flying to still more inaccessible heights; and when he bowed down and worshiped Him, or when he sought comradeship with God and sought to walk with Him along the spiritual way, he was utterly beyond the flight of fowls or the flight of the earthy man.

The reaching out of a man after God, the flying of the soul toward Him, the walking with God, is as real and comprehensible as the migration of the birds. We may not know how it is, but the proof is found in this: that multitudes bear witness that they can walk and do walk with Him in the green pastures and beside the still waters of the Kingdom. It is no odds that some folks are not walking in this path this day; some folks are not at church or at their prayers, are not living clean lives; some folks are not in health because of sin; some are stupid and some are friendless because of sin; that 's no odds, these things are possibilities, re-

alities, though some may not be doing them, sharing them. There is a path which no fowl knoweth, which God hath builded for His children to walk in. We may not know fully the domain it traverses or understand the instinct which urges us to reach out toward God, or His power within us which makes it possible for us to walk with Him, any more than the bird understands all that is involved in the flights it makes; but we know enough by giving heed to our true selves to seek after Him.

We know enough to know that BEHAVIOR is the big word along this pathway. Here is the Decalogue: along this road are commandments that pertain to every phase of life. Over against the temptation to be covetous, to be deceitful, to be resentful, to be proud, to be impure, is the urgent, insistent command, "Behave yourselves!" "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." We know enough to know that it calls for a life of consecration to the best and holiest, the forsaking of many of the old scenes and pleasures as with the migrating birds to a dis-

tant land; it calls for reliance upon God as the Builder of the highway and the Builder of the instinct within us which urges us on toward Him and along the way where He is Comrade and Guide. We know enough to know that it is a way of love, the traveling of which makes us forget old enmities and grudges, makes us to refuse to quarrel, to answer the one who would quarrel, with a smile, "No time for this; I 'm bound for heaven."

Oh! I am aware that many know only the paths which the fowls know, and are journeying the paths which the fowls journey; but I also am aware that God has made man for some better, higher thing than this. We are creatures of two worlds, and if we live in but one, it is our fault, not God's, who has built the way and built us with the image of God and the instinct to follow after Him.

"There is a land mine eye hath seen
In visions of enraptured thought,
So bright that all which spreads between
Is with its radiant glories fraught."

"There, there on eagle-wings we soar,
And sin and sense molest no more;
And heaven comes down our soul to greet,
While glory crowns the mercy-seat."

Through the kindness of God, by His help and encouragement and guidance, I am trying to keep step with Him along the way which leads to purity, to spirituality, to the eternal day. And as I go I urge with all the urgency and persuasiveness of a messenger of God that you find the highway of God and with Christ for Shepherd you become one of the sheep of His pasture.

VIII

DELIVERING THE PRISONER

DELIVERING THE PRISONER

"O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hath set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"—PSALM 8.

VIII

"He shall bruise the head of the serpent."—Genesis 3:15.

IT was a hot July afternoon. There were no clouds in the sky to temper the heat; there was no stirring of faintest breeze to break its monotony and intensity. The sun, nearly overhead, was pouring its ladle of molten rays upon the earth, the leaves were drooping, the corn was curling, and even the grass seemed dry and parched. That afternoon I was in the shadow of a little tent, with camera in position, peering through an opening at a bird's nest not far away. It was the nest of the traill's fly-catcher, built in the fork of a shrub willow, about six feet from the ground on the edge of a willow-thicket. During the past days I had seen the nest building, the nest with its four beautiful eggs, cream-colored, marked with small reddish-brown spots, the nest with its four newly-hatched birds, naked and so helpless, re-

quiring constant attention. But to-day they were well-feathered and alert, and would be ready to leave the nest in a day or two more.

I was interested in watching the family-life, the old birds frequently returning with the insect-food they had gathered in the adjacent thicket, adroitly learning which was the hungry bird to be fed, carefully cleaning the nest, keeping it sweet and tidy. But what interested me particularly to-day was the method by which one of the old birds kept the young birds sufficiently cool. The rays of the sun beat down upon the baby-birds, scarcely interrupted by the few leaves remaining above the nest. Sometimes the bird would stand over them with spread wings, permitting the air to circulate and yet keeping the babes in the shadow. Whether that did not cool them sufficiently or whether the parent-bird was somewhat alarmed by the tent, I know not; but it would stand on the edge of the nest and beat its wings vigorously for perhaps five seconds or more at a time, thus fanning the nestlings, then fly away to the cool of the thicket, but soon return to repeat the operation after feeding one of the little

ones. I was in God's great university, gaining knowledge at first hand.

I noted too that there were but three babes left at home, and surmised the reason. It was so hot in the nest, and it was so crowded with

THE SERPENT

the rapidly-growing children, that one more adventurous than the others had left the nest, probably hopping from twig to twig, a few feet into the thicket, for it was not quite old enough to fly. Now, birds ought not to leave

the nest until they are able to fly, ought to remain under the parents' care; but this one had assumed responsibility for itself and had left the parental home, lured by the shade and cool of the thicket. The parents were not pleased, but were helpless. I could hear the subdued, anxious, scolding twittering as they fed the little prodigal, so that I knew it was there.

Suddenly I heard the little bird's cries for help: piercing, pathetic, hopeless; the same pathos that is revealed all through the animal world under like circumstances, when a rabbit is caught by a dog; when an animal is caught by a trap "which sees the trapper coming through the wood;" when a wounded bird is caught by a hunter; and I knew the bird was in peril. The old birds were immediately at the place of danger. I could hear their wings beating and fluttering, and their screams—tiny screams from tiny throats; but seemingly without avail, for they did not cease.

I was peering eagerly, intently into the thicket, suspecting the enemy, and succeeded in seeing the form of a snake hanging down among the branches. I went out of the tent hurriedly,

seizing a stick as I scrambled among the shrubbery, pushed my way into the thicket, and found my suspicions confirmed. A snake had crawled up among the willow-shrubs and had seized the young helpless bird, intending to devour it. What a revolting, pathetic picture! To most people the serpent is hideous enough under most favorable circumstances, but it seemed doubly a hideous monster here. Its eyes were so cold, icy, steely, relentless, flashing defiance and threatening; its squirming folds sinister and stealthy in movement; its jaws rigidly set in the wing of the bird. And the little bird, torn from its perch, hanging helplessly in the jaws of the snake, helpless in spite of its flutterings and struggles, and its cries becoming more feeble, and the old birds helpless to make any impression upon the vile monster in spite of their willingness to put themselves in its very grasp, and their beating it with their wings and threatening it with their cries. It was a doomed bird unless there was some one to help beyond itself and kin.

I tried to frighten the snake, threatening to strike it with the stick: its eyes only flashed de-

fiance at me, and it held its victim the more firmly; I struck it with the stick: it only tightened its hold; I knocked it to the ground: it dragged the bird with it, and started to crawl off into the thicket with its victim. And it was only when I put my heel upon the serpent and struck it over the head that it loosened its hold and crawled sullenly away into the brush. The little bird lay upon the ground, exhausted and panting but uninjured, for it had been seized by the big wing-feathers, which were wet from the saliva of the snake, but the flesh was not broken. The bird rested quietly in my hand, and when I put it back in the nest, the nest that had seemed too stuffy and monotonous for it before, in comparison with the luring cool of the thicket, it was now content to remain quietly until it was able to fly. When I came to the rescue of the helpless babe the parents had ceased their cries, and soon after I restored the little one to the nest it was cuddled down beneath the wings of the parent. My imagination may have suggested the thought, but it seemed to me that the parent-birds were grateful to the one who with his greater strength had come to the rescue.

My sensations during the incident were peculiar. As I leaped out of the tent and hurriedly clambered among the sprawling branches, there rang in my ears again and again the first great promise of help which God gave to man

BENEATH THE WINGS OF THE PARENT

in his need, concerning the mission of Christ, "He shall bruise the head of the serpent." And as I stood by the struggling bird I heard Him say, "I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; there-

fore mine own arm brought salvation; and my fury, it upheld me." And it seemed as though bending over me and bending over the world was the colossal figure of Christ coming into the world to save the world from sin, and of Him it was being said, "He shall bruise the head of the serpent."

We are so helpless before the serpent, and our helplessness drives us to despair. What thought has been spent upon this problem of evil! Is there any man who has not tried to fathom its mystery, to give some adequate meaning for its existence, to answer the question as to why man must be preyed upon by this "monster of so frightful mien." The theories are legion. The believers in the evolution of the world toward God believe that sin is a good thing; a good thing for a man to stumble and fall, for only in that way does he become sure-footed and strong and agile; a good thing for a man to be compelled to fight, for only thus does he become keen-eyed and resourceful; a good thing for a man to lose battles and suffer and be punished because of lost battles, and thus be driven to desperation, to renewed effort.

And so, if the untried innocence of childhood passes away in shame, there comes a sturdy manhood which has tasted defeat, but has come to taste victory as well.

There are those who believe that sin is the remnant of the beast within us, which is to be overcome in the struggle of life. The mob seizes and burns its victim; it has reincarnated the wolf-spirit. A man selfishly hordes and builds larger granaries; he has reincarnated the tiger, which eats its fill and then watches by the prey to keep the hungry jackals away. And the removing of sin from our natures is the getting farther away from the beast-world. As Tennyson says:

> "I have climbed to the snows of Age, and I gaze at a field in the past,
> Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire,
> But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the man is quiet at last
> As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher."

Or sin is the residuum between the ideal set up by the leaders of humanity and the "common herd," as the masses have been styled. So we hold our conception of sin depending upon our

position in the scale. If we have high ideals we look upon many things with loathing which are not disgusting and may even be pleasing to the multitudes. Then there are those who speak of sin as a great curse. It is the influence, the work of Satan; and one tells us that sin is in the world because God is helpless before Satan, which we find hard to understand; and another tells us that God is temporarily helpless, for it will take Him some time to conquer Satan, which is equally bewildering; and another tells us that God permits sin temporarily for our good; and still another tells us that God can not help Himself, not that He is helpless before Satan, but He is helpless before man. He has given our destinies into our own keeping; He has given us wills, which may be set over against His own in defiance. We choose our own career; we can be obedient or disobedient, as we choose; and therefore sin is of our own making, our rebellion and disobedience to God.

But whatever theory we hold, the certain thing is that sin is here. About this there is no delusion. A man can shut his eyes to sense and facts, and say that "whatever is, is right;"

but he opens his eyes to see that whatever is, is not right, that the world is out of joint, that hearts are out of tune, that family-life has many a discordant note, and the community is not at peace. The problem of hunger is man's great problem in the physical realm. His great concern, the thing which he MUST concern himself about, is to see how the body can be kept from starving, how bread can be provided to satisfy its cravings. And man's great problem in the spiritual realm is the problem of sin, to see whether it be possible that the better life, the ideal life, can be kept from starving and dying, whether the hunger for righteousness can be satisfied.

There are forest-fires that sweep across great areas, destroying vegetation, villages, human lives; terribly relentless forest-fires. And the fires of sin rage in our lives, damaging and destroying our ideals, our better motives, our desires for more unselfish living. It is not hard to conceive a beautiful world, a world in which Fatherhood and Brotherhood are the big words; every man knows God and loves God and looks to Him for guidance and follows His bidding,

and every man under the teaching of Christ loves his brother as himself. If God's purpose were in effect, then it were a beautiful world.

The trouble with the business-world is SIN. In the business-world there ought to be honesty and truth and honor and co-operation. A man's word ought to be good without his note; a man's attitude ought to be that of a friend, and not a foe. But in place of what ought to be we find abscondings and defaultings and cheatings and stealings and bitter competition, until we are sometimes driven to feel that we can not trust any one. The trouble with society is SIN. In our social relations there ought to be friendliness and sympathy and cheering words and unselfish regard for one another's welfare, and a helpful spirit, each counting himself the guardian of every friend and every acquaintance. But in place of what ought to be there are jealousies and backbitings and slanders and betrayals. You do not need to be told how often social functions make it possible for the serpent to enter the Garden of Eden. The trouble with the family-life is SIN. In the family-life there

ought to be perfect confidence and fidelity and sympathy and love. But in place of what ought to be we find parents caring little for the children, and children growing away from the parents, and parents not caring for each other and false to each other, with the last chapter (no, not the last, but the next to the last) written in the divorce-court. The trouble with the individual is SIN. The beaten paths of decency are too dull, and the old-fashioned life of morality is too monotonous, the willow-thicket is so luring, so inviting, so tempting. Either deliberately and joyously or with reluctant consent we leave the proper paths for the forbidden ways: I know to do good, and do it not; I do the things I ought not to do.

Great is our utter helplessness before sin. Often the serpent stealthily crawls upon us unawares, and we are seized before we realize it, fastened in the clutches of some temptation. Often the serpent of temper, discontent, jealousy, covetousness, selfishness, holds us in its grip. We make our protests, but they are so feeble; we make our vows and resolutions, but they are so easily broken; our struggles are so

impotent, the serpent is so strong, our fate seems so certain.

The Son of God came into the world to rescue us from the great enemy. God said of Him, "He shall bruise the head of the serpent;" and He said of Himself, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost;" and again, "to preach the gospel to the poor; to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised."

We welcome Him as the Redeemer, Savior of the world. He has come to bruise the head of the serpent, this monster with a million heads and more. Wherever there are human beings, in the home or on the street, in the social gathering or in the commercial world, in our outward living or in the secret places of the heart; where folks are old or young, rich or poor, known or unknown, in the East and the West, where men are white and men are black and men are brown: wherever men have gone in this wide world, there the serpent has trailed them, seeking to make them its victims; and there the Christ has gone, endeavoring to seek and to

save the lost. And the day will come when society will be purified, humanity redeemed, and the earth filled with righteousness, because Christ has come to bruise the head of the serpent.

Let us be more specific. There is no hope of a world-program, a general program, a social program that does not take the individual into account. Christ will save society and redeem the world by saving the individual. Society will be saved when each member of society has felt the redeeming help of Jesus Christ. It is the one sheep whose bleating He hears; it is the one man whose cry He heeds.

He puts His heel upon the head of the serpent, and I feel the loosening of the grip and a way of escape from the temptation is provided. He adds His strength to mine, and together we are able to tear loose the serpent's coils; He somehow increases my strength by abiding with me, giving me "the strength of ten," and I am able to beat back the serpent; He quickens my knowledge and increases my watchfulness so that I see the danger in the thicket and avoid it, so that I see the leadings

of the pastime or amusement that assumes such an air of innocence and I shrink from the path. And somehow, after He has put His heel upon the head of the tempter, "whereas I was blind, now I see," and "I have become a new man in Christ Jesus." "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The deliverance is at hand. Though I was so near that helpless, struggling bird I had not known its sore distress and dire need had it not cried out. But the moment it cried, my heart was moved to pity, and I hurried to the rescue. Christ is waiting to hear the cry for help. I do not say that He is in ignorance as to our sore condition, but He is helpless against our authority. How gladly He would come; but He can not come until I seek His help. "Would anybody refuse to cry out to Christ

for help, for deliverance from sin?" you ask. Why, certainly; the multitudes do. Christ will give a man strength to escape from the awful clutches of the serpent drink, but the multitudes do not wish to escape; and one man I knew urged to a drink-cure was so anxious to get again into the clutches of this awful appetite that he deliberately rubbed himself with alcohol to cultivate a taste above the result of the drugs used in his cure. Perhaps his plan was not really a help to that end, but that man deliberately thrust himself back into the grasp of the curse. In our jail is a thief who had barely been freed from the serving of a sentence for stealing, until he repeated the crime. There are plenty of harlots who are such by choice; they will not leave the path of sin, though the opportunity presents itself.

People sometimes say, "Why does n't the Church do more?" It seems, with such a great organization, with such machinery, with such numbers of workers, it ought to double and quadruple its results for good. "Why does n't it do more?" And the answer comes swiftly, "Because the world will not let it do more."

It is often ready to help, only to have its offer spurned; it often seeks to come to the rescue, only to meet with rebuke. Whatever may be said about the shortcomings, the Church is ready and anxious to do much more than it does. It warms its room for the unsheltered, it provides entertainment for the destitute, it has words of cheer and comfort for the discouraged, and it would gladly point the way to God. But before the refusal of the man who loves his sin, and who fondles the serpent that strikes at his heart, the Church is as helpless as Christ. The Church would be quick to hear the cry of the one in distress and come to his aid, and I am sure beyond any doubt or question that Jesus Christ would be doubly quick to hear and would be at his side before the words had ceased from his lips.

He is so mighty to save. And therefore our need as Christians is to keep close to His side. Where He leads I can go in perfect peace and safety. And where He does not lead I have no right to go. "At Thy side there is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." "Thou wilt keep him in per-

fect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." If Christ does not lead through the thicket and the desert and the wilderness, I have no right to be there; and if He leads, He will lead me through in safety. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." He is so ready to save; and therefore our need, those of us who have not yet called upon Him, is to hear His voice, entreating, seeking, offering deliverance, offering to rescue us from the serpent and make us free.

Because He has kept His word, has heard my cry, has come to my deliverance, there is gratitude in my heart. If He has led me from the things of the world, and led me to the Father's house, I do not complain; but I praise Him with heart that overflows because of His marvelous kindness. And because He has set me free, in whatever way He can use me I seek to do His bidding, to serve Him, to tell of His greatness, His power over the serpent, His willingness to help, His swiftness to hear.

Because He has bruised the head of the serpent that has threatened my life and thwarted my life, and has set me free, I cry, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

IX

AUTUMN GLORIES

AUTUMN GLORIES

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush."—EXODUS 3:1-4.

"GIVE not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler. Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" —PROVERBS 6:4-9.

IX

"The whole earth is full of His glory."—Isaiah 6:3.

THE autumn time has come, when leaves are thickly strewn and waters lurk in quiet pools and shadows image in their breasts. God is abroad in His world, enriching it and beautifying it and inviting His children to come out and walk with Him. Because I accepted the invitation I found Him at work in His field and woods. And along the Rock River and where the white pine grows I found this sermon. I offer no apology for inviting the Church-folk to leave this building and go with me to those places, that we may there worship God and learn to know Him better. Rather would I chide the Church because it has ignored God's world so much, and so has missed much that it might have learned about Him and broadened acquaintance with Him.

I speak as a friend of the Church. In the presence of her enemies I would be swift to re-

sent attacks upon her from such a source; swift to assert the truth that the Church is God's ambassador and great representative on the earth to preach His Word and exalt His Son and build His Kingdom; swift to assert that the Church has been the great agency in the dissemination of knowledge through its own services and the institutions it has founded for the propagation of the spirit of democracy through its own teachings and leaders it has raised up, the teaching of charity and brotherhood and the doing of deeds of charity. Here is a record to be proud of and only possible because the Church has walked with God and under God's tutorship. But the Church has its human side: it is made of flesh and blood, and therefore is prone to error and to shortsightedness. And it behooves the believer in the Church and friend of the Church to look with critical eyes at its shortcomings, that these may be corrected and the Church made still stronger for the building of the Kingdom of God.

As a friend of the Church, I confess that it has made a mistake in quarreling with the men of science. This is one of the black pages

in its history. Galileo was one of God's great men because of openness of heart and shrewdness of mind which enabled him to discover great truths concerning the planetary system to which we belong. But when Galileo declared

WHEN LEAVES ARE THICKLY STREWN

that the earth moves, the Church persecuted him and compelled him by threat of death to recant; *i. e.*, to lie, to declare what he knew was not true. The Church discredited him in the eyes of the world. Galileo is dead and immor-

talized, and the Church for this deed is disgraced; for everybody to-day knows that Galileo was right and the Church was wrong. He was learning something of God's method of doing things and thus helping the world to greater knowledge of God, and the Church opposed the advance of truth.

Darwin was one of earth's noblemen, gentle in spirit, brotherly in manner, seeking to know more of God's ways in the world. Darwin with his patient investigations and experiments, as well as by his conclusions, made in his theory of evolution one of the great contributions to our knowledge. The Church opposed him, declared him a heretic, denied his conclusions by arrogant assertion and not by evidence, and turned many a friend of the Church who was also a seeker after truth away from itself. Darwin is crowned as one of the great benefactors of mankind; his teachings have become the viewpoint and basis of practically all scholars, and the Church is discredited for her persecution of this man.

The man or Church that fights against truth inevitably loses the battle. For the day there

may seem to be victory; but in the end men will believe what they see and hear, and prove by examination. Truth crushed to earth will rise again, though the Church be against it. We ought to see that the men of science are truth-seekers, patiently, persistently questioning how God has done things and is doing things; and we ought to thank God for these men and the contributions they make to our knowledge. "Have they not made mistakes? Are there not blunders all along the way? Are not the old text-books of science discredited?" Certainly these things are true, but the journey has been one of progress, the motive has been right, the lasting accomplishment has been great; they are on the right track. "Have they not sometimes attacked the Church and ridiculed and opposed it?" Certainly, some men of science have done this, whether justified by the attack of the Church upon them or not. So now and then there is an ugly honey-bee in the hive, and it stings us when we come near. But that will not cause us to throw away the accumulated sweetness representing the toil of many workers, even though it was not meant for us. And the

Church should appropriate to her own use the truth which these toilers in the field of uncertainty and perplexity and mystery gather and bring to the light, and should not scold but praise them, though it means that past opinions may need to be changed and faulty interpretations revised. The truth of God is the legitimate property of the Church.

Again as a friend I confess that the Church has made a mistake in ignoring the world in which we live. A man building a house would take into account the grounds where the house was situated. We have been building a religious house, a theological temple, with Christ as honored Guest, and have practically ignored the world in which it is built. We have largely given the world over to the devil, finding him in burdock and thistle and flood and lightning, and seeing these things everywhere. Or we have ignored the world, counting it merely a place where we must eat and drink and sleep and get our living, but having no reference to the spiritual man. Now, the truth of the world is as divine as the truth of the Bible; the world is as genuinely a revelation of God, a teacher

come from God, as the Bible; and when we interpret the book of Nature and the book of Scriptures rightly we shall find the same sermons, the same laws, the same truths on both pages.

A WALK AMONG THE TREES

So I urge upon the Church this day, and you men and women of the Church, that you seek after God out-of-doors as well as in, in leafy grove as well as in temple of stone. Let us seek God's truth everywhere and let us rejoice

in God's companionship everywhere, and let us not blind our eyes to God's presence when we depart from the cloister and turn from the printed page.

The earth is full of the glory of God because God is in the earth. Oh, He is everywhere: in church, in home, in worship, in prayer, in heart; but God is also in bush and tree, in flower and bird, in creeping vine and soaring eagle. God is everywhere: where daisies bloom, where lilies nod, where sunflowers stare, where willows droop, where the great sea ebbs, where river flows, where streamlet ripples, dances, laughs, and sings. Some say that God is dead or sleeping or gone upon a journey; that God made the world and abandoned it in its travail as a faithless husband his wife. But though friend may desert friend, a merchant forsake his counter, a shepherd his flock, a mother her babe, God does not forsake His garden, His groves with their leafy curtains, His children. I love to be there because I am with the Father.

Somehow there is such comfort and rest and peace away from humanity and near to Nature. I do not justify the life of the ascetic, the her-

mit, the abandoning of the world to its sin and shame:

"We are not here to dream, to drift.
We have hard work to do and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle: face it; 't is God's gift.
Be strong, be strong."

But, on the other hand, let not the heart grow calloused. And when the heart is depressed by the glamour, the guile, the wrong, the oppressiveness and hate and bitterness, secret sin and flaunting vice, then it is our great privilege to turn away from man to Nature, to walk among the trees and by the brook and hear no words of fault-finding or scolding, of flattery or reviling, no oath or obscene jest, and see no drunken rioting or bestial conviviality, marks of the ravagings and fires of sin.

"If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget,
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from fainting, and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills! No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.
And here amid the silent majesty of these woods
Its presence shall uplift thy thoughts from earth,
As to the sunshine and the pure, bright air
Their tops the green trees lift."

The pity is we are so often blind to God and His truth in Nature. Here is inspiration and uplift, here are sermons and parables; and the multitudes are tramping them under foot and do not know they are there, blind leaders of the blind. I looked one day from the deck of the ship across the laughing waters of Lake Superior to the Pictured Rocks of the southern coast. Above the blue waters hundreds of seagulls were floating, tossing as the first great snowflakes preceding the storm are tossed about in gentleness. I saw the great grotto lifting above the beach, seemingly a playhouse of the gods, and on the huge bluffs of St. Peter's sandstone the art-exhibit. The frames across which the canvas was stretched were of whitest enamel and of various sizes, but truly hung, for the lines were perpendicular and horizontal. Through the powerful glass the pictures appeared as forest or plain, as mountain or valley, as river or lake, as trees with flocks of sheep beneath them or as bodies of fighting-men. The sight was fascinating; there was hardly time to breathe. Why would not the vessel stop, that we might gaze and feast until satisfied?

or, if breathless interest would break into words, that we might praise God for His matchless skill and for our privilege in having eyes to see and such wonders to see? And the folks beside me were disgustingly talking about their being such fools as to leave their dinner unfinished to see a pile of rocks stained by the weather. These folks are fit only to be city-folks, to look out upon smoking chimneys and dirty factory-walls, and hear only the screech of the switch-engines and the bawling of the vegetable-men. They are blind and deaf, deliberately so, and are not entitled to the beautiful world God has given us. The farmer has no business to be irreligious, nor the traveler, nor the one who has a chance to see the blue sky overhead, the green grass under his feet, the twining vine or leafy tree in his yard.

But we are sadly in need of miracles repeated of the opening of blind eyes. Men look upon forests and streams and see only wood-piles and sawmills and turning wheels and driving-belts. Women look upon delicate flowers and beautiful birds with envy, coveting them out of wicked hearts for hat or

dress. The woodchuck climbs the fence-post along the meadow or the tree in the woods. The wise man sees and says, "I will turn aside and see this great wonder, why it does this and how;" the foolish man says, "It eats some clover and digs a hole in my field and is worth twenty-five cents at the court-house; I will kill it and scalp it." The wise man sees the crow nesting in the willow-row and says, "I will turn aside and see this great thing, what it is, how this sable bird builds its house and rears its young and gathers its food; will learn something of the abilities with which God has endowed it;" the foolish man says, "I saw it take an egg, and somebody said it pulled the young corn" (and did not look closely enough to see that it was after the grubworms at the root of the corn); "I will climb the tree and pull off the heads of the baby-birds and shoot the old bird; they are worth ten cents apiece at the court-house." And this is done because we are blind and distrust God and His workmanship, and do not learn to know Him better. For if we know Him we will love Him; and we will know Him better and love Him more if we

come to His world with open eyes and loving hearts. Then shall we see "the whole earth is full of His glory."

If I were to write "The Confessions of My Soul," it would be to tell of buoyancy, of exhilaration, yea, even of intoxication when I can stand on a clover-bank or plunge into a field which reeks with the aroma of the wild-grape or the sweet-brier. To be with Nature does my heart good as for a lover to be with a maiden. I love all seasons of the year: the winter, when the snow flies fast and furiously, sweeping into every unprotected place, sifting into nook and cranny, piling over bush and rock and bank in the most fantastic shapes; and the trees are stripped of leaves and no leaf dare show itself for fear of being nipped by the frost, but the sturdy branches will not yield, they only shake their fists in the face of the gale: the winter with the biting cold, when to escape it the prairie-hens bury beneath the snow and break through the crust with a whir when you have nearly trodden upon them, and the muskrat sleeps within the thick walls of the house it has built of mud and reeds; and the

Carolina woodpecker, strange anomaly of migration in the bird-world, hangs upon the south side of the tree-trunk away from the stinging cold; and the rabbit creeps into some underground alley, leaving only the footprints behind to tantalize you; and the stream pulls the coverlet of ice over its breast as the drowsy sleeper pulls the coverlet over him. But it is not drowsy and not pessimist; for as one with tingling cheeks bends his ear to the brook he hears it singing away beneath the frozen crust in spite of ice and cold. And somehow the spirit of the singing brook creeps into my heart, and I dare to say that I too will sing in spite of the storm and bitterness of life.

And when the spring comes, I love the spring, the time of adventurous daring, when hepatica and anemone, bloodroot and buttercup and marigold flaunt their colors to the winds, creeping to the very edge of the lingering snowbanks, defying frost and sleet and snow; and the robin with tawny breast from Southland sits upon the branch of the elm and sings, "Cheer up, cheer up," and will not cease, though the branch be coated with sleet; and the bluebird

carols, "Spring is coming;" and the meadow-lark, bringing color for the first dandelion upon his throat, makes the air ring with his melody, "I 'm here; do n't you see me?" And as the days pass, the flowers multiply and the birds abound and the apple trees burst into bloom and the spirit of adventure is in my heart and life is surging, leaping, and I am saying that I too dare to adventure, to do all that life demands, to go where the journey leads, to bear the load and sing the song God has for me.

And I love the summer with its thick heat and surfeiting of flowers and birds. Summer is a hard-working plodder, the Martha among the seasons, busy about many things. There is not much singing of birds: they are too busy rearing the young, feeding and sheltering and caring for them; but they are so faithful to their appointed tasks. And the orchards have ceased adorning themselves with beautiful sweet-smelling flowers: they are too busy growing the fruit that by and by shall make our barns groan with their weight; and the meadows are busy growing the grass for the cattle, and the fields are busy growing the grain for the storehouses;

busy, busy everywhere. And somehow the spirit of patient fidelity to appointed tasks gets into my heart and I take up the burden with new zeal and increased patience.

And now, because it is autumn, I love the autumn best of all, fading, drooping, dying autumn.

"They 's something kind o' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer 's over and the coolin' fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air 's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder 's in the shock."

A stoop-shouldered old woman with rusty shawl about her shoulders and faded bonnet upon her head comes shambling down the road to the market-place, and upon her arm is the market-basket loaded and groaning with its weight of fruit and vegetables. And autumn is that stoop-shouldered old woman, with rusty garments of fading flowers and dying leaves. Here are the marks of age and of death. But the market-basket groans and bends nigh to breaking with the millions of bushels of wheat

and corn and apples and pears, grain and fruit in such profusion that we can not number, and can only gasp our thanks to God, "who daily loadeth us with benefits." And this autumn day, standing in the midst of the beauty and

DYING LEAVES

wonder of it, we may learn certain great lessons which will enrich our hearts and purify our lives and strengthen them.

Autumn is a reminder of the close of life. Here are the marks of death: the fields are

brown, the flowers are drooping, the leaves are dead and falling, the birds are abandoning it. How swiftly the days pass, and each day more leaves have fallen and more birds have flown, and the signs of death are more apparent! Autumn is as faint and staggering as an old man, faint and staggering toward the grave of winter. And in its presence I feel that the days of life are swiftly passing, that the winter of decay will soon come, and that these days must be crowded with labors that the harvest may be gathered, the fruitage may be abundant.

Autumn is the time of preparation for larger life. In the field the farmer and gardener are selecting the best and strongest and most perfect as seed for the new year; in the woods God the Great Gardener is wrapping the buds in coverlets of down, and storing the sap of trees in underground reservoirs, and covering the acorn with fallen leaves and scattering the best seeds with friendly winds or flowing streams, assorting and selecting the best by means of frost and other wonderful natural agencies, wrapping roots with dying grass; for a new year will come, and God is getting ready for

it even now. And looking upon these things, I see the need of preparation for the new life and the new year, casting aside the worthless to decay, saving and protecting and giving opportunity to the best there is in life, that it may be the seed from which under the gentle keeping of God shall spring newness of life in the new year that is without end.

And autumn is the time of judgment. During the summer the lazy man, the wicked man, the squanderer of opportunity God-given, has loitered on his couch, has slouched at his job, has tarried long at the wine and in the evil place, and has laughed at the man who was early at the task, and who was toiling during the heat of the day, and who denied time to idleness and sin, saying that the day is far spent and the task is great. And while he idled and reveled in sin, the sun shone, the dews fell, the gracious showers watered the earth; spring came and went, summer came and went, and now the autumn is here, and the fields are scant with harvest, and the garden is luxuriant with weeds, and the storehouses are not full. During the summer the wise man has been early at

the task, has brought to it his strength of body and mind, has worked together with God as the sun has shone and the rains have fallen; has said "No" to the tempter of idleness or sin, has looked pityingly to the neighbor who was letting the days of golden opportunity pass, urging him in vain to his task; and when the autumn days are here the man looks upon a summer well spent, for the harvests are bountiful, the land has yielded abundant increase, the garden and orchard have added their treasures to the storehouses.

Autumn is the balancing of accounts. Tears do not count, repentance does not count; labor when the summer is here, counts. The profligate man facing starvation and the industrious man facing plenty are, each after his kind, enjoying the fruits of their labors. There comes the autumn of life which is the judgment time of character. The one man has spent the summer in the cultivating of wild oats, in riotous living, in idleness and carelessness, and the autumn brings him tears and regrets and impotence and trouble and shame and remorse. The life is overgrown with weeds and thorns and

thistles, and tears of repentance will not bring back the spring time. The other man has improved the days, has learned the will and purposes of God, and has worked with Him. Sometimes the days have been weary days, the burdens have been heavy, the work has seemed void and without results, but the autumn comes, and the weeds and thistles and thorns have been kept out of the life, and the gentle fruits of righteousness and peace and love have been cultivated; and if he looks back upon the summer with any tears, it is only because he has not toiled even harder during the heat of the day. He enjoys the fruitage of a good life because he lived that life when the summer was here.

Autumn is a reminder that the time of fruitage comes and that God's treasures, intended for us, are without limit. The sparrows without higher aim than to twitter and loll in the dust are fed, and the lilies spending the day in showing their beauties are clothed. And God with higher purposes for us, declaring that we are of much more value than they, loads us with gifts above number. It is the fruitage time, and the ripened products of earth are

proof enough of God's kindness in material ways, giving us a home with inexhaustible treasures. Standing in the midst of these, I see the higher, unseen world.

These earthy treasures are but suggestive of the spiritual blessings that God has prepared and will prepare for His children. Here is encouragement that faith will ripen into reality, that spring time shall become harvest. Here is encouragement to the farmer, business-man, student, that if he will sow and toil, sow and toil, he will reap the harvest; encouragement to the reformer, that if the struggle is continued against the evil of slavery or saloon or political corruption or oppressed womanhood, there will come deliverance; encouragement to the Christian, that if he will continue at his prayers, reading the Bible, companioning with Christ, and serving Him among men, there will come the fruitage of a noble character, victory over sin, rejoicing in righteousness and confidence in the perfect day that comes.

Permit another suggestion this autumn day. God is a lover of beauty, and here is proof enough. To-day is the heart-ache of autumn

because of departing glories: the birds are going, the leaves are dropping, the fruit is falling, the ground is covered with a death-bed of leaves, many sad good-byes are being spoken. But autumn through her tears is brave, and before the parting will have these days of resplendent glory and magnificence, and before we say good-bye to autumn and autumn friends we will look long and eagerly upon her gorgeous displays, and will have grateful hearts to God, who is the Maker of it all and who loves His children enough to do this and more for them.

It does not matter much where we stand, where we look, the beauty is everywhere; but because the other day I saw the native pine-woods of our State I will ask you to go there with me before we go to our homes. I have seen the pines many times, having traversed them as a boy, having camped in their midst as a man, but never more charming than they were Thursday. That sight was worth going a thousand miles to see, was worth more than the riches of Crœsus. There were three prevailing colors: red, yellow, and green. But these were blended and mingled in countless

shades and tints. There was the great central mass of most intense green; but on the borders, and creeping in here and there, were the other colors. Excepting blue and violet, all of the colors of the spectrum were represented. The oaks were gorgeously arrayed with garments of cardinal and maroon, of salmon and scarlet, of crimson and red; the blackberry and ash and elm were flaunting their banners of canary and lemon, of yellow and orange. To these colors add drab and gray, an occasional cherry and pink, and all the shades of green, from the darkest olive to the lightest sea-green; throw a great arch of blue overhead, with an occasional floating mass of white, and if you have the imagination of a God, you may see the picture our eyes beheld. I have forgotten the sumach and the poplar, most brilliant of all. Moses saw the burning bush and turned aside to see. Here was not one, but scores resplendent with crimson, brighter than the brighest flame, and God was there.

And the poplars! As their tops appeared above the surrounding trees, it seemed as though some Titan had taken great masses of

yellow fleece and thrown them out of the heavens to float down until they should nestle upon the brow of the forest. The ground was covered with bushes; they must have been bushes, but it seemed as though the fallen leaves had stopped before reaching the earth and were floating and swinging in air. Unconsciously the hand drew upon the lines, the carriage stopped,—a deep breath, and—was it a sob? for we were standing upon holy ground, in the very presence of God Himself, and the seraphim were crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" And in the thought were the words of a greater, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

X

MUCH SOWING AND LITTLE REAPING

MUCH SOWING AND LITTLE REAPING

"BEHOLD, there went out a sower to sow: and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth; but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. And He said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—MARK 4:3-9.

"AND He said, So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. And He said, Whereunto shall we liken the Kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. And with many such parables spake He the Word unto them, as they were able to hear it."—MARK 4:26-33.

X

"Some seed fell by the wayside; some fell upon stony places; some fell among thorns; some fell into good ground and brought forth fruit."—Matthew 13:4-8.

We are beholding a familiar spring picture. The snows are melted, the earth is warmed by the genial sun and drenched by April showers, and the sower is abroad marching to the trumpetings of the April winds and the pipings of the birds, scattering the seed everywhere: some of it by the wayside, some of it on the stony ground, some of it among the thorns, some of it on good ground, scattering the seed everywhere.

And behind the sower, in the shadows illuminated by the imagination, one sees the fields of the Great Sower and His gigantic figure striding over the mountains and down the valleys and across the prairies and the waters of the great sea, keeping step to the music of the world and its creatures He has made. And He is

scattering seed everywhere: on rocky mountain and fertile valley, marsh-land and desert, to the south, where the burning sun would seemingly destroy all life; to the north, where the stinging cold destroys life; scattering seed everywhere, trusting that some time, some where, there shall come a harvest. And the human sower is confident that there will be the harvest, that the sowing is not in vain, because he stands in the shadow of the Mighty Sower, who sows the skies with stars and sows the world with many things, and has his confidence begotten by Him.

What boundless thought is contained in this parable, enough for a volume of sermons; yes, for a series of books. Here is the big word SOWER, whether we mean the man who is abroad in the fields scattering the wheat and oats and clover, or the man in business who is seeking trade by widely advertising through scattering sample packages or by improving the stock of goods, or the teacher who is scattering knowledge by means of the newspaper and magazine or in the schoolroom, or the preacher who is scattering the Word of God in the Church and

out of the Church, wherever there is opportunity. Here is the big word Soil, whether we mean the loam upon which the sun falls and which drinks in the dew of heaven, and which has been fertilized by ice-floe and frost and

A FIELD OF THE GREAT SOWER

angle-worm, or whether we mean the commercial field, a teeming world-population, always hungry, always demanding that the body shall be cared for; or the mind with its ignorance, its gropings, its hungerings after knowledge; or

the heart with its barrenness of sin, with its hungering for righteousness and love and God. Here is the big word SEED, whether we mean the wheat and corn, or the sample package of the grocer, or the words of knowledge, or the Word of God. And here is the word FRUIT, whether we mean the shocks of grain and the stacks of hay and the branches in the orchard bending with the weight of ripened treasure, or whether we mean the increased trade and prosperity and wealth of the business-man, or the developed mind with its store of knowledge and ability to solve problems, or the cultivated heart, enriched and stored with every "good word and work."

From the many questions and problems that suggest themselves for our consideration, we choose one for our theme to-day, *"Much Sowing and Little Reaping."* Some seed fell by the wayside, and nothing came of it; some fell upon stony places, and nothing came of it; some fell among thorns, and nothing came of it; but some fell into good ground and brought forth fruit. There were four sowings, and three of them were in vain; but there was one reaping. Much

seed was wasted, much work was done, from which there were no returns. But there were returns because there had been abundant sowing. The lesson is apparent. If we sow promiscuously enough we shall reap the harvest.

The ministry of Jesus illustrates the sermon-thought. He healed ten lepers; nine of them forgot Him, only one became His follower. He fed at one time five thousand and more with the loaves and fishes, and instructed them concerning the Word of God. And at the close of His earthly career, as He was about to ascend to the Father, there were only five hundred with interest enough to gather to bid Him good-bye. He taught thousands; only a mere handful, perhaps only four or five, heard Him well enough to become teachers of the Word after Him.

And here is the question, Why did Jesus squander so much time and strength? Why did He waste His thought and energy upon those nine lepers? Did He not know that they would be faithless? I think so; if He brought enough divinity into the world to cure the lepers, I think that He brought enough to know

their future conduct. Possibly not; He "emptied Himself" when He took the form of a man, and perhaps He gave up this power of fore-knowledge. But whether or not, one thing is sure, *we* could not have foretold; and Jesus, in becoming a perfect example for us, must have acted as it would have been wise and proper for us to act under like circumstances. It would seem to us that there would have been such gratitude as to make the lepers lasting disciples. Are we so dull as not to know folks better? They desire healing and strength of body and mind, they desire knowledge and genius, some of them, not to serve the world but to compel the world to serve them. Those lepers wanted to be healed that they might enter politics, aspire to office, gain position, and be able to domineer over folks; or they wanted to hold rank in society, and be applauded and flattered; or they wanted to enter the commercial world and accumulate riches, that they might gloat over the shining and clinking of the gold coins.

But we can not tell how a man will improve his opportunity, what he will do with his talent. And so if we had been in Jesus' place we would

have needed to heal the ten. Our ignorance makes much fruitless work necessary. We must err on the side of mercy, for one of the ten may be deserving. Because we can not forecast the harvest we must scatter much seed on barren fields. Again, Jesus had put the responsibility on the individual. He had been robbed of excuses. In the day of judgment the lepers could not say, "No man gave me a chance;" the hungry could not say, "No man fed and helped me;" the multitudes could not say, "No man told me these things." The seed had been sown, the opportunity given, the responsibility fixed. Every man must be given a chance and so made responsible for his own destiny. There must be schools for all the children, though many of them do not make good use of the knowledge offered to them. There must be work for everybody, with the attending rewards of food and other necessities and comforts, though some may spurn the task and live a life of idleness. There must be culture of mind and heart available to all, though many may insist upon living boorishly and wantonly and sinfully. I repeat, the seed has been sown,

the opportunity given, the responsibility fixed. And here are lessons for the Church and individual.

This lesson from the Bible of "much sowing and little reaping" is a splendid tonic for the banishing of discouragement. How often we are tempted to say, "What 's the use?" The tiller of the soil has worked hard, plowing and pulverizing the field, planting the seed, cultivating the corn. A hail-storm sweeps down out of the sky, beating the corn to tatters, leaving only a field of wreckage; and the farmer, looking at the wasted field, says, "What 's the use of my trying to have any crops?" Audubon tramps far and wide over the mountains, through the everglades, swimming unbridged rivers, penetrating unpathed forests, studying the birds of our country, and with great patience and diligence transfers their graceful forms and pleasing colors to plates, only to have an unbridled fire leap upon them and burn them to ashes. The work of the years has gone out in flames. "What 's the use?" And this is the title of the song or dirge which some gloomy, dismal, somber, blear-eyed souls are always wailing,

"What 's the use?" The most discouraging thing is not the fruitless seed, is not the fact that there are not returns immediate and bountiful for all our labors; but the most discouraging thing is the pessimistic complaining of folks saying, "What 's the use?" The preacher delivers a sermon urging the forsaking of sin, and some one says: "What 's the use? Folks will go on sinning anyhow." He urges the people to come to the lecture-course for intellectual development, and some one says: "What 's the use? They will not come anyhow." He derides the foolish, destructive habit of nickel theaters, and hears: "What 's the use? Folks will go anyhow." He denounces the lawless saloonkeepers and officials who do not compel them to obey the law, and hears: "What 's the use of offending folks? They will go on breaking the law anyhow." He tries to make folks ashamed of their slow running and little progress, and urges upon them the need of higher ideals and more faithful service, only to hear: "What 's the use of trying to get folks to lead better lives? They will go right on in the old paths anyhow."

"What 's the use?" is the baneful narcotic the devil uses in allopathic doses. How often you say: "What 's the use of going to church? It is n't necessary; I am all right without it. What 's the use of attending lectures? I am more comfortable by the fireside, dozing or playing a game of dominoes. What 's the use of inviting folks to give their hearts to Christ or to become disciples of Christ? They just laugh at me. What 's the use of teaching in the Mission Sunday-school or calling on the unfortunate or giving money to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked? They do not appreciate it, and it does n't do them any good anyhow." And many a time, because of the discouraging atmosphere emanating from our neighbors or because of our own seeming failure to accomplish our desired purposes, we go with Elijah to the juniper tree, wailing "What 's the use?"

But from the juniper tree we can see the sower Jesus saw, and the thought under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit comes, "Well, I am not the only failure; my experience is the very same that Jesus had when He walked

among men." How often He heard it said to Him, and how often it has been said since by readers of the Bible, "What was the use of trying to preach to the Samaritans," forgetting that there was a woman of Samaria upon whose heart the word of Christ fell as upon fertile ground; "what was the use of arguing with the Pharisees and disputing with them," forgetting that the word of Christ found lodgment in the hearts of Joseph and of Nicodemus; "what was the use of eating with publicans and sinners," forgetting that a Mary Magdalene and a Zacchæus, most improbable, unlikely soil, received the word with gladness and were enriched and became enrichers of others; "what was the use of going to Jerusalem to die," forgetting that ever since the multitudes with shoulders bending with their burdens, and hearts sore with their sins, have found the cross of Christ as a shelter in the time of storm, the lifter of burdens, the comforter of hearts?

And if we count it failure because there are not apparent returns for all of our labors, then we must count God equally a failure. Our complaining spirits say: "What 's the use of

all the stars? Many of them have never been seen, and many of them only by the few who have looked through powerful telescopes; and even of those within range of the eye, they are no good, they do not feed anybody, they do not make anybody any richer. And what is the use of the flowers that bloom in the woods, and the mountains where nobody ever goes? And what is the use of all the plants which we call weeds, and of all the insects with wings of gossamer or with richly-colored outer wings; and what is the use of all the birds and all the fishes and all the vermin?" But in spite of our petty complaints God goes on sowing the sky with suns and planets and constellations, goes on sowing the desert and waste places of the earth with beautiful flowers, goes on sowing the land with beautiful birds and songs of birds, goes on sowing the mountains with trees and shrubs, the seas with fishes and delicate seaweed.

What does it mean? Perhaps nothing is wasted. It may be for the time; but perhaps eventually everything has its place in the world's journey toward God. Perhaps what for the

moment seems to be wasted endeavor or battle lost may prove to be the very winning of the campaign. Perhaps the failure to accomplish a certain purpose may accomplish a greater purpose, help to execute a broader plan. There are compensations to be taken into account. The farmer has gained health and experience if he has lost the corn. Do we know enough to say that anything is a failure? But after all the lesson is this, our much sowing without a returning harvest is the same experience that God has and that Christ the Son of God had. And if we are in line with them, having the same experience they have, we are in the right path. And there is this other thought springing, "Who is judge?" What business have we to judge as to results? "What 's the use?" as spoken above, are blasphemous words. It is not our business to measure the returns, and to quit because they do not seem to us adequate for the labor invested. It is the business of Paul and Apollos to sow the seed, God will attend to the increase.

Here is also the lesson of indiscriminate sowing, sowing everywhere with the hope that in

places unexpected as well as expected there shall spring a harvest. This is God's method in Nature. On a single dandelion-stem He builds a hundred seeds and equips them with wings and sends the wind that snatches them from their bed and carries them everywhere. He builds a hundred thousand seeds upon the maple tree, and to each He gives a sail, so that they are scattered far and wide before the breeze. Some seeds are carried by the streams, some by the feet of birds, some are attached to the hair of animals. God employs many methods, He is insistent always; and as a result the seeds are scattered everywhere, on fertile ground and on sterile ground, where vegetation already grows luxuriantly and where it has been swept away by fire and where it has never grown on some coral-island of the sea. Most of the seeds die, some of them live. Some spring up at once, and some wait many years. The pine forest is cut down or burned, and straightway the deciduous forest springs up in its place. The seed had been sown, and was waiting its chance. God keeps the plant-kingdom going by this indiscriminate sowing, generous sowing.

God is following the same method in the animal kingdom. A fish lays a million eggs. What 's the use? The vast majority will be destroyed, devoured as eggs or as little fishes.

NESTING IN HIDDEN PLACES

And we perhaps say, "Wasted;" but God propagates fish that way. The same plan is true of the birds. They are scattered everywhere, nesting everywhere, in hidden places and in

open places. The vast majority are destroyed by storms or by vermin as eggs or young birds not out of the nest, but God gives the music and gay colors of the birds to us by that method.

Must it always be true that "the children of this world are wiser than the children of light?" for men in business follow the same method. They advertise their wares in many places and in many ways, in magazines and newspapers and Church literature, on fences and barns, by circulars and personal letters, by samples and agents, not expecting that all of these methods will bring a harvest, but expecting that by this indiscriminate sowing there will come a sufficient harvest. The man on the farm learns the same lesson, to sow many kinds of seeds, to have various crops, to employ diversified farming, so that, though some might fail, not all would fail.

And this is the very method that has brought success to the Kingdom of God. How often Paul must have felt like saying, "What 's the use?" Why, there was shipwreck and prison and flogging and stoning and threatening and peril. How useless, hopeless it seemed to be

talking before Felix and Agrippa and the centurion and the mobs that assailed him and the soldiers who guarded him. Nearly all of Paul's words were wasted; but because he persisted with noble patience to sow the seed, some of it found its way into fertile soil, and the day came when Tertullian was able to give his message concerning the power of the gospel to the Roman official, and the Roman Empire was conquered, and Europe was converted, and the world brought within reach of the gospel. How often John Wesley must have felt like running before the storm rather than submitting himself to abuses and revilings and attacks of mobs. But because he splendidly persisted, preaching to high and low, rich and poor, farmer and miner and city-dweller, there came the great revival that saved England from a "French Revolution."

God builds His Kingdom that way. He floods the world with His Spirit. Like the wind, it moves everywhere; like the seed, it lodges everywhere. Most of it seems to bear no fruit; but now and then it strikes fertile soil, and there grows up a Moses or Isaiah, a

Peter or Paul, a Luther or Wesley, a McCabe or Moody. The seed is sown in the Pacific Garden Mission, and a McAuley or Sunday is converted; in a country revival-meeting, with bad roads and a scanty attendance to discourage, and a Bristol or McIntyre is converted; in a city-revival, and a Drummond or Grenfell is won to God. A street-corner meeting, the singing or whistling of a gospel song, a word fitly spoken, may be the fruitful seed.

The Church and the individual Christian need to learn this lesson. This is no plea for slipshod, unorganized methods, but the danger in our day is of too much organization. We are putting too much emphasis upon it, we are too careful not to waste any of our efforts, we are too insistent upon returns, we are afraid of wasted efforts; too much of our strength is being dissipated, wasted in trying to prevent seed from falling upon stony ground; too much time is being wasted by the sower trying to pick up the seed from the wayside. The need is for more sowing, more indiscriminate sowing. Let the pastor take his Christmas cards with a word for Christ to every home he can reach. Many

families will care nothing for them, but some will be cheered by the remembrance, and here and there one may be brought to Christ. Let him preach sermons to everybody. Some may sleep under them, but now and then one may be saved. The need is that laymen shall not have a select few in whom they are interested, but shall rather invite everybody to whom they have access, to church; invite them repeatedly, no matter how often the invitation has gone unheeded; shall tell everybody who will give any opportunity the good news about Jesus Christ, improving every opportunity, being all things to all men, being instant in season and out of season; for this is God's method and the method He would have His children follow.

The final lesson for our encouragement is that the harvest is certain. We are sure of this, that most of the seed will not grow. That is the lesson of Nature: a hundred seeds sown for one plant builded; seed destroyed ruthlessly on every side, and yet some of it finding the fertile soil and producing the certain harvest. And this is the experience of the Church. Why, there has been preaching enough and there have

been Bibles enough printed to have saved the world long since. But much of the effort has been vain.

And we are also sure that we can not forecast the results through knowing where the soil is fertile or what seed is fertile. We can not tell what sermon may bring conviction to some wandering soul, what boy in the Sunday-school may become the great leader for God, what visit for Christ to a neighbor may bring knowledge of God to that home, what word may be the word that shall arouse some good impulse.

But of this we may be confident, that if we are faithful to our task of sowing we are sure of the harvest. "What 's the use of preaching?" we say; but the Church grows amazingly; it runs, and does not grow weary; it leaps from shore to shore, and the voice of Christ is heard in every land. "What is the use of trying to do charitable work?" we say; but asylums and hospitals and libraries spring up like mushrooms in the night, and the sufferers are being relieved from famine, and playgrounds are being built for the poor, and wealth is being poured into the lap of the Church so prodigally

that it is embarrassed by its very abundance. "What is the use of fighting the saloon?" we say; but last year fifteen thousand were put out of commission, were padlocked, and the movement toward their complete abolition sweeps on amazingly. "What is the use of trying to lead a good life, a useful life, a Christlike life?" We make so many failures, we fall so often, we commit so many sins; but somehow under repeated effort and renewed effort the character does grow toward God, and righteousness does get firmer lodgment in our lives, and the Kingdom of God grows night and day, we know not how. And so the problem is a simple one. He that sows promiscuously enough shall reap the certain harvest. Therefore let us go forth sowing the seed, even though with weeping; sowing it abundantly, persistently; knowing that we shall come again with rejoicing, bearing the sheaves.

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